

CASE OF SHELF 3

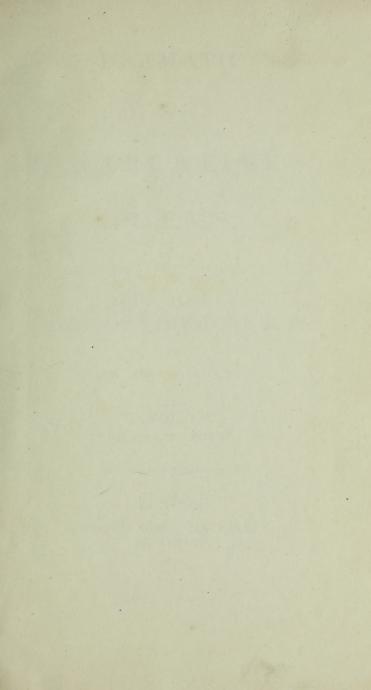
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# DRAMATIC

AND

# NARRATIVE

# POEMS.

BY

# JOHN JOSHUA EARL OF CARYSFORT, K.P.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.
DRAMATIC POEMS.

## LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MACKINLAY, 87, STRAND. 1810.

# DRAMATIG

NARRATIVE.

PORNS

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CAIUS GRACCHUS.

MONIMIA.

THE FALL OF CARTHAGE.

POLYXENA.

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Page 25. 1. 7. for grasps read grasp.

1. 7. for Questor read Quæstor. 27.

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1. 3. for balanc'd read balanced. 38.

1. 20. for when read where. 44.

56. 4. for Faunius read Fannius.

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# CAIUS GRACCHUS.

Καί τοι σμικροί, μεγάλων χωρίς, Σφαλερον πύργε ρύμα πελονίαι.
Μετά γάρ μεγάλων βαιος άρις άν Καὶ μέγας οξθοίθ ὑπὸ μικροτέρων. 'Αλλ' ε δυναίον τὸς ανοήτες Τέτων γνώμας προδιδάσκειν.

Σοφοκ. Αἴας μαςιγ. 158.

## PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Caius Gracchus, a Tribune of the people.

Fulvius Flaccus, a Senator of the party of Gracchus.

Opimius, the Consul.

Cælius,

of the party of Gracchus. Duilius.

Rutilius, a Senator.

Citizens.

Cornelia, the Mother of the Gracchi.

Servilia, Wife of Caius Gracchus.

Sempronia, his Sister.

Attendants.

SCENE, ROME.

## CAIUS GRACCHUS.

## ACT I.

## SCENE I. THE STREET.

CÆLIUS, DUILIUS.

DUILIUS.

CELIUS, the leaders of the several tribes, Are they instructed to possess the forum, With all their numbers?

CÆLIUS.

Yes, and by my orders

Furnish'd with arms.

DUILIUS.

With arms? 'Twas rashly done.

May Jove preserve the state! The multitude

Furnish'd with arms! Who shall restrain their fury?

Again our streets shall reek with civil slaughter.

CÆLIUS.

Thou know'st what deep alarm has seiz'd the senate. Hast thou forgotten when their frantic rage Beat down to earth Tiberius' sacred head?

When these, the vaunted fathers of their country,
Blush'd not to shed a tribune's blood? My friend,
I tremble for the life of Caius Gracchus.

Our arms for just defence are necessary.

DUILIUS.

For just defence? 'Tis we provoke the war.

The senate never will unsheath the sword.

Peace best assures their power, and fear of change

Still guides their councils. But if now the rashness

Of our adherents rush to violence;

Their friends are powerful, prudent, firm, united.

Ours, a disorder'd rabble, wavering, fickle,

Timid, and faithless. In the hour of danger

They left Tiberius, and will leave his brother.

## CÆLIUS.

One certain motive still decides their conduct,
The sense of present interest. And believe me,
Nor fear, nor fickle temper drew the people
To leave Tiberius. Want of prudent foresight
And staid precaution, such as now we use
Offer'd the foe, th' advantage which he seized.
But the experience of that fatal time
Points out the path to fair success. You wrong.

The people's virtue, and our Caius' prudence. They bear their arms under appointed leaders, Nor move but by his orders.

DUILIUS.

Look, behold,

The Senators are passing.

[Here the Senators are seen, in mourning habits, passing over the stage to the Senate House.]

Are my eyes deceiv'd,

Or do they wear the garb of mourning, such As to th' amazed people still proclaims

When the state totters on the verge of ruin?

It is a paltry artifice, Duilius,

To shake the public mind; but do not fear,

'Twill fail its purpose.

DUILIUS.

By th' immortal Gods,

It is a sight that moves me.

CÆLIUS.

How, Duilius!

DUILIUS.

The fathers of the state! The sacred Senate! Under whose auspices the Roman greatness Has risen above the nations! On whose rolls What name but by some signal act distinguish'd Of service to the state!

CÆLIUS.

What, dost thou falter?

Wilt thou betray thy friends?

DUILIUS.

Cælius, not so.

But on my life, the form of legal power,
Th' authority which waits upon the image
Of Rome, our common mother, in the Senate
Visibly shewn, has force to awe the bravest,
And will affect the multitude, accustom'd
To move at their command to war, and bow
To their decrees.

#### CÆLIUS.

Thus still doth wavering fear,
Ev'n from herself, with plausible pretence,
Strive to conceal her trembling. True it is
The people feel the greatness of the Senate,
And therefore lift avenging arms against them,
Because they smart under their iron rule.
These proud imperious nobles wrest the laws,
Grasping the wealth, and greatness of the state,

And leave us but the empty name of sovereignty.
But we are Romans, born to liberty,
Knowing our rights, and daring to assert them,
And while the nations round pay homage to us,
Disdaining to be slaves at home.

DUILIUS.

These sentiments

I would were graven on the people's hearts;
But I have seen them in the hour of trial
With all their passions swelling to the heighth,
Shrink back abash'd from presence of the fathers,
And therefore fear them now. But see, the tribune!

## SCENE II.

CAIUS GRACCHUS, FULVIUS, CITIZENS FOLLOWING THEM, CÆLIUS, DUILIUS.

CAIUS GRACCHUS. [To the Citizens.

Once more, and in your country's name, I thank you, Romans,

Well does your zeal become the noble cause
Which calls it forth, and Rome shall yet be free.
Now to your several occupations hence,
And ere mid-day expect me in the forum.

[The Citizens retire.

Cælius, Duilius, in th' important charge
Committed to your faith, have you been vigilant?
Say are our friends prepar'd?

CÆLIUS.

In every tribe

The leaders whom you nam'd have heard their orders.

DUILIUS.

And all th' inferior multitude instructed From them will take the signal.

CÆLIUS.

Such their zeal,

So firm their faith, and not to be seduc'd Or terrify'd, that fair success assur'd Pursues our enterprize.

DUILIUS.

Yet, for that dangers,

When unforeseen, are fatal most, 'tis fitting
That our most honour'd Tribune be appriz'd
The friends, and clients of the nobles, all
Prepar'd, and more in number than was thought,
Will meet in the Comitium: and the Senate
Array'd in mourning habits, and with shew
More than accustom'd solemn, to impress
The wondering people with religious dread

Of some impending great calamity,

Have mov'd to their assembly, and even now

Their consultations are, I judge, begun.

GRACCHUS.

I cannot wonder our imperious nobles, So long accustom'd to unquestion'd sway, Should when the deep foundation of their power Shakes with the rising spirit of the people; And when the knife with keen resistless edge Is laid against the sinews of their strength, Struggle to ward the blow. Nor am I ignorant How many friends, how many vile dependents, Wait on continued, and successful power. But when was great, and glorious enterprize, Such as might claim the guerdon of renown, To danger not obnoxious? But we know That glory grows with danger. 'Tis the spur Which urges on the brave to pain and death. If in pursuit of this attempt we perish, We perish greatly, and posterity Will crown with just applause our noble deed.

CÆLIUS.

The meanest citizen upon our party
Will gladly perish in the cause of freedom

They have the Roman spirit.

GRACCHUS.

I believe it.

But wherefore perish? Are not our adherents
In number more than those who prop the Senate,
And resolute no less? By recent injuries
Rous'd into action, and with sure advantage
Attendant on success confirmed in purpose?
Our cause is freedom. Equal liberty,
And power, and wealth, to all. Theirs is oppression.
A little portion of usurp'd authority
And wealth extorted, sparely parcell'd out,
And held at their good pleasure, the great motive
That pricks their followers on. This well consider'd,
And all precautions wisely had, I think
Success is most assur'd.

DUILIUS.

We hope no less.

#### GRACCHUS.

Yet for that my intelligence imports

Not only that the clients of the nobles

Are strictly charg'd, with arms beneath their gowns

Conceal'd, to join th' assembly of the people;

But that their furious, and unbridled rashness

Has plac'd the sword in vile, and servile hands,
Against the sacred majesty of Rome:
I hold it fitting, and what wisdom bids,
We arm for our defence. When they shall find us
Prepar'd, 'twill check their rage, and spare th' effusion
Of Roman blood.

CÆLIUS.

The citizens are warn'd,

And will obey your orders.

GRACCHUS.

We commend,

The noble Fulvius, and myself, your diligence. But strictly charge them, lest impetuous zeal Should violate the peace we mean to guard, That not a blow be struck, or sword be drawn, Until I give the signal.

DUILIUS.

We shall use

Our utmost efforts to fulfil your purpose.

CÆLIUS.

The leaders of the tribes are well advis'd For all occurrences.

GRACCHUS.

Omit not, Cælius,

And thou, Duilius, with a friendly band,
'To seize with timely care the foremost stations
In the Comitium, and each avenue

Possess with faithful citizens. Farewell.

## SCENE III.

GRACCHUS, FULVIUS.

#### GRACCHUS.

Fulvius, this awful, this important hour, Which brings along the crisis of our fate, Demands maturest counsel. I confess Though my firm soul, still to its purpose true, Swerve not aside; though not the thirst of fame Alone, nor love of glorious liberty, But the dear hope of great, and just revenge Urge my determination: yet ev'n now, When I behold the deep and fiery gulf Threat'ning destruction, on whose burning edge We stand, 'appall'd I shudder, and remain Uncertain to retreat, or to advance. For if we fail in this attempt, we rivet Our country's chains, and plunge ourselves in ruin; Nor shall the vengeance which we both have sworn, Sooth the sad spirit of our lov'd Tiberius.

#### FULVIUS.

Much doth it move my wonder, Caius Gracchus,
That doubts like these should shake thy constant breast.
The people have been tried, and on my life,
Our party is the stronger. All in vain
The nobles have their troops of clients muster'd;
The law must pass, and the censorian power,
Thus to the people virtually transferred,
The firmest bulwark of the senate's greatness
Falls to the ground.

#### GRACCHUS.

All this, I grant, is true.

Among our friends we count Patrician names,
And many senators, unwarp'd by power,
The love of justice to our interest binds;
But more thy bright example. Thou retainest
The memory of the people's benefits.
Rais'd by their choice to consular distinction,
And in the senate plac'd, thou bear'st thy dignities,
To do them service. Oh were all like thee!

#### FULVIUS

I bear my dignities to serve the people, And to revenge the murder of Tiberius. Me too the principle of just defence Incites against the senatorian party.

If he was guilty, and deserv'd to die,

Why so did I, and when the time shall serve

My head may pay the forfeit.

GRACCHUS.

Oh, my friend!

Just is our indignation, our revenge
Is just, and fair our prospect of success;
And yet my careful breast is full of fears.

#### FULVIUS.

What fears? The multitude are still uncertain,
Fickle and wavering, and Patrician artifice
May bend them to its purpose. Fears't thou this?
Impossible. Their passions all inflamed
Secure success in present. For the future,
Censorian power (which, by the prudent law
The Roman people's tutelary gods
Have prompted thee to move, will from this day
Be fully vested in the people's leaders)
Provides sufficient guard. To this be added
The ready succours of our brave allies,
Who once partakers of the common freedom,
Plac'd as they are beyond corruption's grasp,
Will, when some great occasion calls them forth,

Fill the Comitium through its wide extent With bold assertors of the public cause.

GRACCHUS.

Oh that a single traitor's venal voice

Should all the fairest plans of patriot wisdom,

All the bright prospect of a nation's freedom

Destroy for ever!

FULVIUS.

Whither tend thy words?

Fulvius, the people are betrayed. Their tribune Has sold them to the senate. What avails That we command the suffrage of the tribes?

Minutius——

FULVIUS.

What of him?

GRACCHUS.

Has to the Consul

Engag'd to interpose his negative On our proceedings.

FULVIUS.

Let him be degraded.

GRACCHUS.

A tribune!

FULVIUS.

We command the people's suffrage.

GRACCHUS.

A sacred magistrate!

FULVIUS.

What else remains?

To bear our prompt submission to the senate, And deprecate their anger?

GRACCHUS.

Thus far, Fulvius,

According to the order of the law

Have we proceeded; and I should be loth

To stain the lustre of our enterprize

With violence, and wrong.

FULVIUS.

Why then farewell

The liberty of Rome! Farewell our hopes!

A nation's hopes! Gracchus, the people's favourite,
Gracchus, almost their God, deserts their cause!

GRACCHUS.

No, Fulvius, let us try a milder course.

FULVIUS.

Oh manes of my friend! Oh sacred spirit Of my belov'd Tiberius! Lo, thy brother Shrinks from his task. Nay more, upon thy name Fixes a blot, and sullies all thy glory!

Thy doom was just, 'tis Caius has pronounc'd it!

GRACCHUS.

Thou wrong'st me, Fulvius Flaccus.

FULVIUS.

Hear me, Caius.

When all the frantic senate stain'd their hands,
Here in the forum, in thy brother's blood,
A tribune then, a sacred magistrate,
All but the consul, Mutius Scævola:
Thou then wast absent, serving in the war
Against Numantia, under Publius Scipio.
I was a witness of that fatal time.
I saw Tiberius Gracchus struck to earth,
Beneath repeated blows saw him expire.
Their savage fury ended not with death.
His breathless body ignominiously
Was haled along, and thrown into the Tiber.

GRACCHUS.

Accursed was the deed-

FULVIUS.

Awhile be patient.

Thus did he fall. But of his glorious acts

Not one has perish'd. That Agrarian law Survives him a perpetual benefit To those for whom he liv'd, the Roman people. I too was present, but thou wast not, Caius, When in th' assembly of the tribes, that law Was pass'd. It was a memorable day. The senate then, as upon this occasion, Had with a tribune, of that sacred name Unworthy, practis'd to betray the people Forbidding to proceed. What then did Gracchus? Never before the people's magistrate By them created to protect their rights, Had dar'd to violate his sacred trust, And madly lifted his rebellious voice Against his masters. What did Gracchus then? Did he with tame, and servile acquiescence Submit in silence to the artful senate? Or bravely taking counsel from the times: The public good; the spirit of the laws; Did his great soul suggest the glorious means To blast the factious purpose of a traitor, And vindicate the people's majesty? The tribes were called to vote. Th' astonish'd senate Beheld the degradation of their tool,

The vile Octavius. The Agrarian law
Was pass'd. The senate swore obedience to it.
But was the justice of this fair proceeding
Arraign'd? And when they had resolv'd his death,
Against Tiberius did th' incensed nobles
This, as a violation of the law,
Presume to urge, which might have veil'd their guilt,
And seem'd to sanction murder? No. They dar'd not,
Though th' abrogation of the hated law
Had follow'd thence. And thus has precedent
Determin'd in this point, the people's power
Over their officers; and thus would Caius,
With half the courage of his noble brother,
And half the zeal to do his country service,
Give to the wind his doubts.

#### GRACCHUS.

I dare affirm,

And so I think the tenor of my actions

Distinctly speaks, no mean, and coward motive

Will lead me to desert the public service.

And if nor urgent pray'rs, nor pleaded reason,

Can from his purpos'd crime divert Minutius,

The great example by my brother shewn

Is present still before me. But the senate

Assembled now should be observ'd. 'Tis fit That we be present at their consultations.

FULVIUS.

Thou hast reviv'd me, Caius. In thine eye I read the genuine spirit of a Roman.

Methinks Tiberius stands again before me.

Lead on, I follow thee.

## SCENE IV.

(As they are going out, Servilia and Sempronia, with their attendants, enter veil'd. Servilia meeting her husband raises her veil.)

GRACCHUS.

My dear Servilia!

Sempronia too! What holy rite, my love, Thus with the rosy morning's orient beam, Demands your pious care?

#### SERVILIA.

Alas, my Caius,

Not with the morning's orient beam alone,
But when the sun's meridian glory shines,
And when the balmy evening's dews descend,
And when the cares of half the world repose,
We wake to grief, and weary heaven with prayer.

#### GRACCHUS.

Forgive me, Fulvius, these fair mourners claim me Some minutes space. I'll meet thee in the senate.

## SCENE V.

GRACCHUS, SERVILIA, SEMPRONIA, ATTENDANTS.

Oh thou, dear object of my fondest love,
Dismiss thy fears. Propitious omens lead
My steps, and all conspire to my success.
Let not thy streaming tears, my dear Servilia,
Repress my triumph, and obscure my hopes.

#### SERVILIA.

Oh Caius, even thy success I fear:
Alas, Tiberius Gracchus was successful,
And when Cornelia press'd him to forbear,
Would tell her of his triumph o'er Octavius.
Oh, by our mutual love, if yet thou lov'st me;
Oh, by our children, who demand thy care;
Pursue no farther this design of danger.
The senate will prevail. The fickle people
Resign thee unprotected to their vengeance.

#### GRACCHUS.

Servilia, when the public service calls me,

And honour bids proceed, if I should falter, I were unworthy of the name of Roman, Unworthy of the sacred trust I bear, And of thy love, Servilia.

## SERVILIA.

Ah, Sempronia,

Thou hast no more a brother, I, alas,
No more a husband, and my hapless children
No father, no protector! poor Cornelia,
Soon shall thy age be childless! Oh, I see thee,
I see thee, Caius, mangled in the tumult,
Proclaim'd a traitor, nor these wretched hands
Shall cull thine ashes, nor these widow'd eyes
Shall pour their streams on thy untimely urn.
But, with thy brother's, shall thy bloody corse,
Borne by the rapid Tiber to the sea,
Feed the insatiate monsters of the deep.

#### GRACCHUS.

Servilia, shake not thus my soul. Thy tears
Unman me. I shall play the woman too.
Be comforted. And doubt not, dear Servilia,
But that whatever caution may consist
With honour, and my duty, I shall use
To guard my life. Expect me in the evening,

Dismiss thy fears. Our party has been muster'd, And shews a brave appearance. My Servilia, Once more farewell. Sister, sustain her spirits, We part but for a season.

#### SERVILIA.

Oh ye Gods,

Ye heavenly guardians of connubial faith,

Confirm the word! But, ah, my boding heart

Tells me we part for ever. [They go out severally.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## A C T II.

## SCENE I.

An apartment in the house of Gracchus.

CORNELIA, SEMPRONIA, SERVILIA, ATTENDANTS.

CORNELIA. [To an attendant.

The consul, didst thou say, would speak to me,
On matter of importance to the state,
Commission'd by the senate? Oh, my daughters,
I fear some new misfortune. This rash youth
Plunges at every step more deep in guilt.
And now perhaps the measure of his crimes
Is full. The venerable fathers, mov'd
By strong necessity, decree at length
His death, or banishment. Else why this message?
Why should the sovereign magistrate of Rome
Thus break upon the privacy of grief?
Acquaint the consul, though my afflicted soul
Seek in retreat and solitude to hide
Its cares, I wait the orders of the senate.

The attendant goes out.

It must be so. My son would push the people

To some new violence: the sacred barrier Of law to trample under foot, and spurn At just authority. Or what, if mov'd By the example of Tiberius, who Entangled in the maze of policy Fell to his foes a victim, with bold arm He grasps at sovereignty?

#### SERVILIA.

Alas, alas

Who shall defend my Caius? Who protect him From the insidious malice of his foes?

When ev'n his mother, ev'n the good Cornelia, Thus, thus condemns unheard her only son, Imputes his conduct to the vilest motives, And with the murderers of Tiberius joins Against his very life.

#### CORNELIA.

It is the doom

Of heaven's eternal ruler which impels me
To this necessity. And though my tears
Still flow incessant o'er Tiberius' urn;
And though my anxious soul has still pursued
With constant care my last surviving son;
(Whom I had fondly hop'd to have reserved

The staff and prop of my declining age) Yet ere I shall forget the sacred duty I owe to Rome, ere the republic perish; Perish that son I have so dearly lov'd, Perish Sempronia, perish all my race. I ever wish'd my sons might bravely bleed To do their country service. If they fall Class'd with its enemies, and justly victims Of its offended laws, I only mourn That they have liv'd.

#### SEMPRONIA.

On the Sempronian name

As yet I trust no stain of guilt remains. Tiberius with a just, and patriot zeal, Mov'd by the sufferings of the Roman people By legal methods sought to do them right, And fell by violence. My brother Caius-

## CORNELIA.

Should from the recent madness of Tiberius Have learn'd how rash, and factious innovation Might shake the deep foundations of the state. And spar'd his country; but a private vengeance Goads him to desperate daring, and postpones The public good.

SERVILIA.

Indeed, indeed, Cornelia,
You wrong your son, you wrong my Caius greatly.
He never did postpone the public good
To private views. His soul is all his country's.
But still the malice of his foes pursues him,
And wrests his very virtues into crimes.
When Questor in Sardinia, such his zeal
And strict integrity, his private wealth
Was wasted for the state. Three tedious years,
Beyond the term appointed by the law,
In voluntary service he consumed,
And yet at his return—

CORNELIA.

Oh would to heaven

He never had returned!

SERVILIA.

Is that Cornelia?

Is that a mother's voice?

CORNELIA.

I cannot blame
Thy zeal, my daughter, nor will wholly believe
My son has from his breast exil'd the love
He owes his country. He may yet redeem

His sullied fame, and lift the name of Gracchus Equal to Scipio's, who in early youth Curb'd with the prudence of consummate age His ardent passions, and became no less Famous for temperance, than for deeds of arms. But see the consul comes. Retire.

[Servilia and Sempronia go out.

## SCENE II.

CORNELIA, OPIMIUS.

#### CORNELIA.

Opimius,

The most distinguish'd member of the senate,

The consul, charg'd with their commands, is welcome

To this abode of sorrow.

## OPIMIUS.

Noble lady,

The conscript fathers, knowing well, (and where Is such high worth unknown) Cornelia's virtue, Have on important business to the state Commission'd me to move thee.

## CORNELIA.

How, alas,

Shall this weak body, and distracted mind,
Profit the state? And let me speak my wonder,
Opimius, that the senate have selected
The Gracchi's foe profest for this employment.
It bodes, I fear, destruction to my son.

#### OPIMIUS.

I shall not study to conceal, Cornelia,
I am the foe of Gracchus. The republic
His factious spirit has endanger'd. Perish
All who by force, or artifice assail it.
I praise his courage, his munificence,
His moving eloquence, and if employ'd
To render service to the state, should love them.
But if in antient times the name of Brutus
Became renowned to posterity,
Because he gave to death his only son,
Who practis'd to o'erthrow the general liberty;
I hope we are not so degenerate,
As that a Roman matron should condemn me
Because I have withstood a public enemy.

#### CORNELIA.

Opimius, though thou dost not love my son, I must perforce confess thou hast spoken nobly, As fits a Roman.

#### OPIMIUS.

To my purpose then.
This hour, Cornelia, with the fate of Rome
Is big. Upon the very verge of ruin
The state is tottering. By thy son conven'd
The tribes assemble, and the fearful question,
On which they must decide, imports no less
Than if the just, and equal government,
Fram'd by the wisdom of our brave forefathers,
Shall yield to wild, licentious anarchy;
All the degrees and orders of the state
Rudely confounded, and the populace
Trampling upon the senate, and the laws.

#### CORNELIA.

The senate knows with what a duteous zeal

I love the commonwealth, but ah, Opimius,
It serves but to enhance the pang of grief
With which the public danger rends my heart.
What can Cornelia do? 'Tis from my son
The mischief springs. Scipio, 'tis true, the head
And ornament of our Cornelian house,
Might by his honour'd name, and high authority,
Curb the fierce licence of this headstrong youth;
But he is distant far.

#### OPIMIUS.

I trust the senate

Has yet authority, and force, to curb,
And punish too, who dares assail the state.
But studious of the public peace, and anxious
Th' effusion to prevent of Roman blood;
Nor by these motives mov'd alone, but reverence
Due to thy virtue, they would save thy son.
And therefore they command thee, ere the hour
Appointed for the assembly, to essay
If thy maternal, and persuasive wisdom,
May win him from his purpose.

#### CORNELIA.

What the senate eport, Opimius,

Commands I shall perform. Report, Opimius, The promptness of my zeal.

#### OPIMIUS.

Th' immortal Gods

Who love the just will aid thee, and the state
Hail thee its saviour. To th' assembled fathers
I bear thy answer. To thy zeal and duty
Thy country's thanks are due. [Opimius retires.

## SCENE III.

Go seek my son,

And tell him, ere the tribes assemble, here,
Upon an urgent and important business,
That I desire his presence. Leave the room,
I would be private.

# SCENE IV.

## CORNELIA.

Pause a while, my soul,
And in this interval of dread suspense,
Say what is virtue? What the good, for which
We toil, and labour through a weary life,
Despising wealth, and pleasure, and repose,
And glittering greatness, and majestic power,
To wed with lowliness, and poverty?
Why should I study to withdraw my son
From his pursuit, who even now is lifted
High o'er his equals by the people's favour,
And grasps perhaps already power supreme
(That fondest wish of turbulent mankind)

With full impunity? Oh by what mark Shall virtue be distinguish'd? Does renown Attend her flight, the loud applause of nations? Successful crimes, and splendid vices share it. Is it success? 'Tis won by coward policy, And dark intrigue, and hardy violence, Virtue then loveliest seems when most oppress'd. Is it the favour of th' immortal Gods? And do they bear the sceptre of the world To crush with heavy and repeated blows What most they love? Is virtue then a name. An empty sound, a vain and baseless vision? Is that an empty name, a baseless nothing, Which spurns the lot of vile mortality, And emulates the Gods? Say rather, pomp, And wealth, and greatness, whose unstable fabric Hangs upon circumstance, and with a breath Dissolves, say these which virtue scorns are nothing. Adversity, and power, o'er which she triumphs, Mocking their feeble efforts, these are nothing. Virtue deriv'd from heaven, to heaven aspires, Lives by herself, and treads on time and fate. It is a portion of æthereal flame, Which proves us issued from th' immortal Gods,

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With demi-gods, and heroes fam'd of old, Heirs of their bliss, and partners of their sway.

# SCENE V.

CORNELIA, AND ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

Madam, your son, obedient to your orders, Attends to know your pleasure.

CORNELIA.

Let him enter.

## SCENE VI.

CORNELIA, GRACCHUS.

GRACCHUS.

Let me, thus lowly bending on my knee, Honouring the virtuous author of my being, Implore her blessing on her son.

CORNELIA.

Arise,

And mark me, Caius. That this womb conceiv'd thee, Sustain'd, and in the common course of nature Produc'd thee into life, I count it nothing.

And the relation, thus by chance or fate

Created, moves me not. I pray'd the Gods
That I might give the state a virtuous citizen.
And to this end I train'd thy infant mind
With goodly discipline. Minerva gave thee
Courage, and skill in martial exercise,
And grac'd thy speech with moving eloquence.
This I beheld well pleas'd, and if thou art,
As I do hope, the son of the republic,
Thou art my child: But if her enemy,
Thou art an alien to my heart and blood,
Whom I disclaim for ever.

#### GRACCHUS.

I'm a Roman,

And bear about the honourable scars
Of warfare in the service of the state.
Nor in the peaceful city have I sunk
Inglorious in the lap of ease, but labour'd
To purge the sickness of the commonwealth
With wholesome remedy, and lop abuses
That have o'ertop'd the laws.

#### CORNELIA.

Hast thou done this?

Indeed? Why then the name of Caius Gracchus May stand enroll'd with Lælius, Fabius, Scipio,

Cato, and Flaminius; and Cornelia

Be hail'd, and honour'd in the public ways,

For being mother of so blest a son.

GRACCHUS.

The gods are witness that I have pursued
With all integrity of heart, and purpose,
My country's service. If detraction's tongue
Have sullied my fair fame, and pour'd suspicion
Into my mother's bosom, 'tis the lot
Of those who quit the common beaten road,
To toil for brighter glory.

CORNELIA.

Answer me.

Why are the tribes assembled?

GRACCHUS.

To restrain

The usurpation of th' aspiring nobles,
By limiting the great censorian power,
Which else were made an engine to oppress
All who shall dare oppose them.

CORNELIA.

And in this

Thy purpose is but to preserve the state,

The ancient government, and common liberty?

GRACCHUS.

Most certain.

CORNELIA.

I have often heard, my son, Scipio, and Lælius, with thy noble father, Discoursing of the state. The Roman people, They said, alone could make the law, and just It was, that what concern'd the common good, And flow'd from general motives, unsolicited By spur of some particular occasion, Should be by all determin'd. The executive And the censorian power, our noble ancestors Had wisely plac'd apart, to be administer'd By those, whom service render'd to the state, And long experience, fitted to decide Of men, and things; but by the public choice Selected. Thus at once the general right Was guarded, and the Commonwealth preserv'd From hasty, rash, and popular decision. Now tell me, Gracchus, these illustrious men Conceiv'd they rightly of our government?

GRACCHUS.

I do believe they did.

# CORNELIA.

Oh then, my son,

Wilt thou with rash, and wanton innovation, O'erturn the state, thus wisely balanc'd?

#### GRACCHUS.

To me it seems that forms of government.

Are but subvervient to the public weal.

The principle and essence of our state,

The common liberty, and that invaded,

Or any ancient institution warp'd

To favour usurpation, patriot virtue

Will seek a cure, nor term it innovation.

# CORNELIA.

Never was yet seditious leader, Caius,
That wanted smooth, and plausible pretence
To gloss his actions. Never yet ambition
That mov'd with brow unmask'd to usurpation.
Tis now three ages since the commonwealth
Rose on its base of freedom. From that time,
Beneath the senate's leading, has the state
Increas'd in greatness, wealth, and liberty.
Scarce does the rising, and the setting sun
Limit our empire. Carthage is no more:

Greece is our subject. Syria owns our power:
And Capitolian Jove has seen, in chains,
The sovereign of the Macedonian name
Adorn a Roman's triumph. 'List thy rabble,
And lead thy factious demagogues to war.
And when thou hast achiev'd the twentieth part
Of any paltry province, plead thy service,
And from the hands of Scipio Africanus,
Metellus, Flamininus, and Marcellus,
Lælius, and Mummius, Cato, and Popilius,
Demand the reins.

GRACCHUS.

No rash presumption, madam,

Has prompted-

CORNELIA.

Give me patient hearing, Caius.

'Twas when the lofty capitol resounded With Scipio's triumph, and exulting Rome Beheld the wealthy spoil of ruin'd Carthage, The shouting people hail'd me as I pass'd, Because my daughter was the wife of Scipio. My bosom by maternal feelings mov'd, Then form'd a fond, and ah pernicious wish, That future ages might distinguish me

The mother of the Gracchi. The rash prayer
The furies heard. My son Tiberius first
Lifted th' accursed brand of civil tumult,
And perish'd in the flames. Since that sad hour
In solitude have I conceal'd my shame,
Still fondly hoping my surviving son
Might comfort my weak age, and raise to heaven
By noble actions the Sempronian name.
Vain, fruitless hope! That son, alas, is arm'd
To stab at my frail life, shaking with broils
The safety of the state, and madly striking
At lawful rule.

#### GRACCHUS.

That son, Cornelia, never Has passed the limits by the law prescribed, To compass his designs. Even yet unpunish'd The murderers of Tiberius walk abroad With fronts unblushing. They who dared assault A tribune in his office, nor abstain'd Even from his sacred life.

# SCENE VII.

GRACCHUS, CORNELIA, DUILIUS.

#### DUILIUS.

This bold intrusion

Forgive. Already in the throng'd comitium

Th' impatient people call aloud for Gracchus;

The time not brooks delay.

GRACCHUS.

I follow thee.

## CORNELIA.

Thou go'st, my son, whether resolv'd to fill
The measure of thy guilt, or spare thy country,
I know not. But methinks a spirit prophetic
Swells in my breast. Oh Mars, and Vesta hear!
Jove the preserver! Guard the Roman state,
Avert th' impending ruin. 'Tis in vain
I pray. The fatal moment comes. I see
Expiring liberty. I see the senate,
An idle pageant, and an empty name.
The people crush'd: the tribunitian power,
Like a Colossus o'er the subject world,
Striding triumphant, proudly trampling down
The law, the wealth, the majesty of Rome.

Thou go'st, my son. If to renounce thy purpose,
Thy mother, and the righteous gods shall bless thee,
Thy life be honour'd, and thy fame immortal.—
If to persist, my curse upon thy head!

[They go out severally.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

# ACT III.

# SCENE I. THE STREET.

CÆLIUS, DUILIUS, ROMAN CITIZENS.

#### CÆLIUS.

What, loitering here? Hence to the forum, hence.

Already thirteen tribes have given their voices,

And thou, a citizen of Rome, thus careless

Whether this traitor to the people's cause

Meet his due punishment?

CITIZEN.

What traitor? Say

What punishment? We have been from the forum Perforce detain'd, and know not what has pass'd.

DUILIUS.

Minutius-

CITIZEN.

How! the tribune!

CÆLIUS.

Yes, Minutius.

The tribune of the senate, not the people. Scarce had our Gracchus, ever faithful found

And zealous, mov'd, according to his promise, That from the hasty sentence of the censor Appeal be thenceforth to the people had: And with loud shouts, and hands uprais'd to heaven The tribes had signified their approbation, And crowded with their ballots to the urns; Minutius, whether by the senate gain'd, Or mov'd by envy of the noble Caius, Forbad proceeding. Oh, the indignation That lighten'd in each eye! A murmuring sound Arose, like billows breaking on the shore. But soon from man to man, through all the forum Contagious fury spread. Then hisses, shouts, Threats, execrations, pour'd from every side. Upon the brow of every senator Appear'd malicious joy: but chief the consul On Gracchus smil'd in scorn. He all unmov'd Demanded silence. Then with noble rage Hurl'd all the thunder of his eloquence Upon Minutius, when with ashy cheek Trembling he sate; while Gracchus, not unmindful Of his great name, to speedy justice urged The kindling tribes, and twenty thousand voices Cried out, degrade, degrade.

DUILIUS.

The senate shrunk

Amaz'd, and stagger'd at the bold proposal.

CÆLIUS.

E'er since the murder of Tiberius Gracchus
Our tyrants, confident, and flush'd with victory,
Fearless have trampled on us, vainly deeming
No tribune would defend th' insulted people
E'en at the risk of life.

DUILIUS.

But Caius knows

No fear but for the commonwealth.

CÆLIUS.

The senate

On this have built their hopes. The Roman people Will leave the tribune. Did they not desert Tiberius, when the senate flew to arms?

Thus speak the nobles.

FIRST CITIZEN.

We were then surpris'd.

Who had imagin'd that the conscript fathers

Would dare to interrupt a fair election

With arms, and violate a tribune's person?

SECOND CITIZEN.

But now we are prepar'd. We too can wield

Our swords. We too have heard the sound of battle,

Nor shrunk from wounds.

## THIRD CITIZEN.

And any violence

Offer'd the tribune, shall the senate mourn In blood.

#### CÆLIUS.

This is a noble zeal, my friends,
And speaks success. What, when our numbers equal
Theirs twenty times told over, shall we falter?

Hence to the urns, away. In all you meet

Infuse your generous ardour. [Other Citizens enter.

CITIZENS.

We have heard

Minutius has betray'd us, and ta'en part With the nobility.

· CÆLIUS.

'Tis so, my friends.

But Gracchus, noble Gracchus, though his life Be loudly threaten'd, still maintains his purpose. CITIZEN.

His life is threaten'd? Do the nobles then
Hope to surprise us, as when poor Tiberius
Was slain? See, we have arms, nor shall our tribune
Want firm defenders.

CITIZEN.

We will die to save him.

Oh, well done, honest friends. The gods are with us,
And Rome shall yet be free. But to the forum.

Gracchus has mov'd for degradation, and
The votes are taking now.

[The Citizens go out.

SCENE II.

DUILIUS.

Their zeal is ardent,

And yet my soul forebodes a fatal issue.

CÆLIUS.

Hence with thy coward fears, we cannot fail.

The degradation of Minutius' certain,

This great example will deter the senate

From farther opposition. But behold

Where Fulvius comes, and on his bende brow

Sits apprehension. On my life, Duilius,
Thy fears were founded, and the fickle people
Shrink from their leaders. Fulvius, what is passing
In the comitium?

FULVIUS.

What is passing? Ruin,

Confusion, shame. Four tribes already, Cælius, Have voted for the senate.

DUILIUS.

This I dreaded.

We have been rash and hasty.

FULVIUS.

No, remiss,

Our friends have not been muster'd, nor the avenues That to the forum lead secur'd.

CÆLIUS.

My charge

It was, and well perform'd. Despair not yet.

We have ever known the clients of the senators

Were numerous, but, I yet am confident

We have the greater force. What shout is that?

Shouts.

DUILIUS.

Again! What dreadful scene is acting?

FULVIUS.

Hark,

The tumult thickens, and the name of Gracchus Distinctly meets my ear.

CÆLIUS.

The shout of triumph!

Minutius is degraded.

FULVIUS.

Rather say

That Gracchus perishes.

DUILIUS.

Lo, here is one

That will inform us.

SCENE III.

CÆLIUS, DUILIUS, FULVIUS, A CITIZEN.

DUILIUS.

Come you from the forum?

CITIZEN.

I do. Confusion reigns, and blood I fear Is shed ere now.

FULVIUS.

What of Minutius? Say!

Of Gracehus what?

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CITIZEN.

At distance plac'd, I know not
The sentence of the tribes, but saw distinctly
The noble Gracchus on the rostra. Sudden
Wild uproar rose, with cries and shouts confus'd,
And here and there the multitude was driven
In heaps, like waving corn before the wind.
But 'midst the tumult still in vain my eyes
Inquir'd for Gracchus.

#### FULVIUS.

'Tis too plain, the nobles

Have dragg'd him from the rostra, have cut short

His days, and all our hopes are lost for ever!

Farewell. I hasten hence. May the just gods Preserve the city's peace, and perish all Who would disturb it.

# SCENE IV.

CÆLIUS, DUILIUS, FULVIUS.

CÆLIUS.

'Tis some partizan

Of the Patricians. I will still believe
Our party is successful. Hark, again! [Shouts.

FULVIUS.

Why stay we here? I will no longer bear
The torture of suspense. You who are brave
Will follow me. Let's perish with our friends.

DUILIUS.

Here comes a senator.

FULVIUS.

It is Rutilius.

CÆLIUS.

I'll question him.

## SCENE V.

CÆLIUS, DUILIUS, FULVIUS, RUTILIUS.

CÆLIUS.

Well met, Rutilius,

Whence is this tumult? Have the tribes decided?

Minutius is depos'd. Th' incensed people
Rush'd furious to his seat, and haled him thence,
Nor had he 'scap'd with life, but Caius Gracchus
Sprung from the rostra, "Romans, friends," he cried,
"Oh do not thus with murd'rous violence
Sully the lustre of your noble deed."
And pressing through the crowd, at length he join'd him,

And there, not without danger to himself, With prayers, reproaches, and persuasion, Prevail'd to rescue him, and led him forth. Somewhat redeeming thus good men's opinions By his ambition alienate.

FULVIUS.

Ambition,

Rutilius? Never did ambition fire

The breast of Caius Gracchus. 'Tis the vice

Of those who trample on the freeborn necks

O' th' Roman people, and with proud exclusion

Grasp at the sovereignty.

#### RUTILIUS.

Ambition still

At innovation. We maintain the state

As we receiv'd it from our brave forefathers.

But wherefore parley with the rash abettors

Of vile sedition, whose profession mocks

At sacred order? If th' immortal Gods,

Our tutelary powers, have not disclaim'd

The care of Rome, their vengeance shall confound you.

## SCENE VI.

CÆLIUS, DUILIUS, FULVIUS.

CÆLIUS.

Farewell. Thy empty threats, and vain forebodings We laugh to scorn. These haughty nobles smart Beneath the lash. But see where Caius comes.

# SCENE VII.

CÆLIUS, DUILIUS, FULVIUS, GRACCHUS.

FULVIUS.

Hail, great assertor of thy country's cause!
Hail, virtuous Roman, by the gods approved!
Methinks the spirits of our great forefathers
Surround thy graceful form in splendid ranks,
And on thy brow display the bright effulgence
Of all their patriot virtues.

#### GRACCHUS.

Valiant friends,

To me more sweet than morning's balmy gale,
Breathing o'er flowers, to him who newly raised
From sickness now first gazes on the sky,
My country's grateful praise. But yet, believe me,
Not the vain breath of popular applause,

Nor fame's loud voice, sounding to distant ages,
Has mov'd my bosom, like the suffering people,
Who, robb'd of the protection of the laws,
Have groan'd in penury, while the proud nobles,
Swell'd with their spoils, and mighty from their ruin,
Have mock'd their misery, and us'd them still
The tools, and not the partners of their empire.

#### FULVIUS.

Thanks to the gods, and to thy virtues, Caius,
A brighter day now dawns on Rome. The people
Exult in their recover'd rights, nor bled
In vain Tiberius. His Agrarian law,
Maugre the opposition of the nobles,
Mines the proud fabric of their power. To-morrow
Completes our triumph.

#### GRACCHUS.

True, my noble friends,'
Our labours are not finish'd, and the tribes
Must with the dawning day again assemble.
Duilius, Cælius, on your faithful ministry
We still rely.

#### DUILIUS.

Our bosoms, Caius Gracchus,

Burn for the service of the commonwealth, With ardour not inferior to thine own.

CÆLIUS.

With cheerful hearts, and joyful expectation We shall perform our office. Fare thee well.

# SCENE VIII.

FULVIUS, GRACCHUS.

GRACCHUS.

Now, Fulvius, art thou satisfied? Thy counsel Has triumph'd, and Minutius is degraded. What yet remains?

FULVIUS.

To pass the law respecting

The office of the censors, and to open
The freedom of the city to th' allies.
The senate has been humbled, nor will dare
Oppose us farther. Dare! They cannot. All
The tribunes now are ours, and all the tribes
Ardent in zeal, and flush'd with victory.
The laws once pass'd, then vengeance dawns upon us,
Then every drop of blood, that from the veins
Of our Tiberius stain'd his native earth,

An hundred immolated senators
Shall expiate. Then shall Scipio Nasica,
Fabius, Popilius, Cassius, Lepidus,
Calphurnius, Faunius, all the murderers
Of thy slain brother; all the enemies
Of the Sempronian name, and of the people,
In one proscription perish, and this consul,
This proud Opimius, with his blood cement
Fregellæ, rising once again from ruin.

### GRACCHUS.

We yet have but provok'd the senate, Fulvius:
Their strength is still entire. To-morrow's sun
May light intestine war, and loathing see
The swords of Romans stain'd with Roman blood:
I mark'd the consul. In his eye appear'd
Scorn and defiance. No unmanly fear,
No base dejection. Will the senate, Fulvius,
Tamely submit? The Roman senate? Proud
Of ancient sway, and train'd to deeds of arms?
All the successful, the renowned leaders,
To whose superior prowess Syria, Greece,
Carthage, and Macedon the nurse of heroes,
Have bow'd the neck: Will they, my friend, resign,
Tamely resign their honours, and their greatness,

Aw'd by the terrors of the rabble? Never.

Arms must decide, and to our numbers, Fulvius,
Rude, and undisciplin'd, and prompt to change,
The senate will oppose experienc'd valour,
Names great in war, and firm determin'd conduct.

FULVIUS.

Summon th' allies.

GRACCHUS.

Our hopes are in ourselves.

Our friendship has been found too fatal, Fulvius. Fregellæ smokes in ruin, and the soil Yet reeks with slaughter of her citizens.

FULVIUS.

The senate knows the weakness of their party.

Upon Minutius rested all their hopes

Of legal opposition, and their friends

And clients muster'd all in arms; and yet

Have they not shrunk? and can we fear them now?

They will not violate with open force

The law, the stale pretence on which they build

The fabric of their power, and trampling down

The people's most unquestion'd rights, begin

What most they dread, a civil war.

GRACCHUS.

Remember,

Fulvius, that fatal, and disgraceful day,
When on the pavement of the Roman street
A tribune's sacred blood was shed, and all
The dastard people from their leaders fled,
Nor daring to defend, nor to avenge.
'Twas for election then th' assembly met,
Their most unquestion'd right. The consul nobly
Refus'd the sanction of his high authority
To war against the city. Yet they ventur'd
To invade with arms the capitol, and victory
Cover'd their bold rebellion.

#### FULVIUS.

Our experience,

Thus purchas'd by our dearest blood, demands
Maturest caution; force expected easily
May be repell'd. The people have been warn'd,
And will assemble arm'd.

## GRACCHUS.

Yet farther, Fulvius;

Collect a chosen band, inured to arms,

And should wild tumult, and confusion seize

Our party in the forum, and the senate

Drive thence our faithful tribes, possess Mount Aventine,

There may our numbers rally, and the war,

With more deliberate counsel, be renew'd.

FULVIUS.

'Tis well advis'd. I hasten to obey thee.

Farewell. But, Fulvius, ere we part, remember
This business asks for secrecy. Alarm
Might else invade our friends, and blast our purpose.
Arm we for war, but let us wear our weapons
Veil'd with the olives, and the robes of peace.

[Fulvius goes out.

# SCENE IX.

AS GRACCHUS IS GOING OUT, THE CONSUL OPIMIUS ENTERS ATTENDED. THEY LOOK STERNLY AT EACH OTHER, THEN OPIMIUS SPEAKS.

#### OPIMIUS.

A noble triumph hast thou, Caius Gracchus, Achiev'd, and worthy the Sempronian name. While others toil upon the frozen Alps, The plains of Thrace, and Afric's sultry soil. To heap the capitol with foreign spoils, The Gracchi bravely quit the beaten road,
Seek out a path untrod before to glory,
And rise upon their country's shame and ruin.
Witness Numantia, where the Roman honour
Was, by Tiberius, to a naked herd
Transferr'd of vile barbarians, till redeem'd
By Scipio's prowess, and the senate's firmness.
Witness the forum. All the ancient limits
Of law and order trampled down, and twice
A sacred magistrate, with impious fury,
Forc'd from his station.

#### GRACCHUS.

Well doth it become

Opimius, recent from the barbarous slaughter
Of our allies, the faithful Fregellates,
To taint the lustre of the name of Gracchus.
Long did my father, consul twice, defend
The frontier with successful arms, and teach
The fierce barbarians to revere our city.
But to the party of the senate, consul,
We leave untouch'd their honours of the forum.
No tribune brib'd to violate his trust:
No sacred magistrate, with impious fury,
Transfix'd with wounds: no wholesome laws evaded

With covert artifice: our name distinguish.

We still have sought by other arts to rise.

Proud usurpation, and corruption baffled,

These are our triumphs, to the Roman people

Their laws, their wealth, their liberty secured.

#### OPIMIUS.

It was the law which gave to every tribune
His separate negative. To this provision
The senate still have bow'd, and thus invaded,
Who from the practice of bad men, like thee,
The senate and the people shall preserve?
Detested treason! Thinly veil'd ambition!
That on pretence of public liberty
Would grasp the sovereign greatness of the state.

## GRACCHUS.

Proud senator, who with calumnious tongue Defam'st the virtue thou shouldst emulate, When did suspicion of base private motives Attaint the name of Caius? Look around: What province through th' extent of Italy But to the world proclaims my public care, And my munificence? I have consider'd The wealth transmitted by my ancestors As a deposit for the general service;

And sought for station not to fill my coffers, Or to augment the honours of my house, But——

## OPIMIUS.

The just gods alone with searching eye
Can pierce the close recesses of thy heart,
And know thy secret counsels. But, rash youth,
Say hast thou yet to learn, that ancient sway
Invaded, and the sacred bounds of law
O'erborne, then rude licentious anarchy
Unbars the gates to tyranny and wrong?
And better 'tis to bear the time's abuse,
Which patient care and prudent consultation
Palliates, or remedies, than madly risk
The safety and the being of the state,
By hasty innovation.

GRACCHUS.

Tyranny

Is enter'd in already, and the people

Have smarted under wrong. Your government

Has been continued innovation; we

But labour to restore our ancient rights.

OPIMIUS.

Whether the people, of control impatient,

Spurn at the senate's just authority;
Or, insolent in power, and with ambition
Inflam'd, the fathers seek unbounded sway;
Hear, Capitolian Jove, a Roman's prayer.
Oh, lift thine arm, and let thy lightnings blast
Whoe'er shall with sedition undermine,
Or rush with impious violence to shake
The solid base of this imperial state,
Destin'd, by thy eternal law, to lift
Her blazing front, and awe the vanquish'd world.
And if in this dread hour, my erring zeal
Pursue her ruin, while I seek her safety,
On me, on me thy flaming bolts be hurl'd,
Perish each noble, each patrician name,
The senate perish, but let Rome remain.

[Opimius goes out.

# SCENE X.

GRACCHUS ALONE.

Bethink-thee, Caius, in this awful moment,
While yet thy foot may back retire; oh think,
Where dost thou urge thy daring course. Beneath thee,
Perdition frowns, and infamy behind.
Remorse invades my soul. My mother's curse

Rings in my ear, and every sense appals. My wife too-my Servilia-shall her tears Fall unregarded ?—My rack'd soul is torn With doubts and anguish-say, if I resign My office? What! desert the cause my honour Is pledg'd to? As if touch'd with dastard fear, Shrink in the hour of danger? From the senate Implore forgiveness? Ha! and press the hands Yet reeking with my brother's blood? Oh shame, Oh vengeance! Manes of my lov'd Tiberius, Yes, I have sworn, and you shall be obey'd. 'Tis you demand my sword. Ye furies, hear! Plunge me amid the flaming Phlegethon, Lash me with snaky whips, pursue my steps With all your fiends, remorse, despair, and madness, If I forego my just and dear revenge. I come, proud senators, who vainly fear'd No vengeance for Tiberius slain, I come. Ruin impends, and all your greatness totters.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

# ACT IV.

# SCENE I. THE STREET.

## FULVIUS.

The senate summon'd! At an hour like this! It bodes a tempest-And I fear our counsels Have been too rash. Opimius is a warrior Tried in the field, of bold and fearless temper; And his election to the consulate Bespoke the people wavering. What remains? Is there no respite?—None—The die is cast, And we must stand the throw. - OhRome! oh vengeance! Oh the dear hope of power! But not yet, Despair invades my bosom. Oh, not yet Will I abandon you. Force may prevail, Nor always to the skilful, or the brave, Inclines capricious victory. Perhaps The senate may be won by argument, Entreaty, or persuasion, to defer Awhile their vengeance. Is it not the nature. The very basis of their institution.

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To stifle civil tumult in the birth,

Not give it life, and motion?—Ha!—'tis plausible—
Cornelia—her attachment to the commonwealth
Is known, and much the senate still respects
Her virtues—By her powerful intercession
Time may be gain'd—And lo, the favouring powers
Hither direct her steps.

# SCENE II.

FULVIUS, CORNELIA PASSING FROM HER HOUSE WITH SERVILIA, SEMPRONIA, AND THEIR FEMALE AT
TENDANTS.

#### CORNELIA.

The victims, Glycera,

Sacred to gloomy Dio, and to Proserpina,
And to the Manes of my son Tiberius,
Whose spirit, thus, my fruitless piety
Atones with sacrifice, are they prepared?

# ATTENDANT.

They are, and since the sun's declining beam, Beside the altar, where the cypress grove Shadows the mournful monumental urn, Await your pleasure.

## CORNELIA.

My beloved daughters,

The furies of my son, untimely slaughter'd,
And common rites of sepulture denied,
Infest the city, and the minds of men
Visit with madness. By our offerings
Appeas'd perhaps at length, our prayers, our tears,
They yet may rest.

FULVIUS.

[Advancing.

Hail, thou illustrious matron.

Not with profane intrusion to disturb
Your holy purpose, but to share your grief,
And while like you I mourn for slain Tiberius,
Like you to sorrow for my bleeding country,
Do I approach you.

#### CORNELIA.

If thy bosom, Fulvius,

Throb with unfeign'd regret, I cannot tell.

It has been often known that men have wept

The ills their rashness, or their crimes have caus'd.

But if our country bleed at every vein,

And thy soul shudder at th' impending ruin,

Say, who has giv'n the blow? Pernicious man!

Whose baneful arts misled my noble sons,

Ev'n now thy breath inflames our civil discord, And arming against Rome the hands of Romans Prepares her funeral pile.

## FULVIUS.

I have not merited

This censure, lady, and ev'n now I labour
To stem the torrent of the people's fury.
It is an awful moment, upon which
The very being of the commonwealth
Depends, and, what should move thy bosom more,
The safety of thy son.

## CORNELIA.

How I have lov'd

My son, Rome and the gods can witness, Fulvius. But if his safety must by crimes be purchas'd, And rise upon the public ruin, let him Perish, but be the commonwealth immortal!

# FULVIUS.

The gods forefend a Roman citizen
Should hold his life, but for his country's service.
And well I know the virtue of Cornelia;
Whose soul, inflexible to private motives,
Clings to the state, and lives in the republic.
But, ever watchful for the public peace,

I mark'd the moment when your son appear'd Touch'd by the dark complexion of the times.

And I am strong in hope he may be won

To quit his rash and dangerous enterprize,

Let but Cornelia second my endeavours.

CORNELIA.

For such a purpose, Fulvius, do not doubt My zealous aid. But by the senate's order I late essay'd the temper of my son:
Unmov'd he heard me.

FULVIUS.

Let but space be granted,
We shall prevail. Our tutelary gods
Have bent his mind. He doubts, and reason now
Will plead to willing ears. But then the senate—

What of the senate-

FULVIUS.

At this awful hour The consul has conven'd, and much I fear, For some sinister purpose.

CORNELIA.

At this hour,

When darkness and the night command repose,

The senate call'd! Do not the tribes assemble With the first dawn of morning?

FULVIUS.

'Tis so order'd.

CORNELIA.

'Tis most assur'd. The fathers rous'd at length Assume their terrors, and will vindicate The laws insulted.

FULVIUS.

Noble matron, thou

Art all our hope. By thy entreaties mov'd,

The senate may awhile suspend their vengeance,

Mean time thy son—

CORNELIA.

His forces may collect,

And arm his paricidal hands against us.

No, Fulvius. Let the senate guard the state

With wholesome caution, and th' immortal gods

Direct their counsels, and defend their cause!

But had thy shallow artifice prevail'd

Over Cornelia, could'st thou vainly hope

A woman might, with step profane, intrude

Upon the secret counsels of the senate,

And warp their firm decrees?

FULVIUS.

I had rely'd

Upon thy intercession, and the care
With which the senate tenders public peace,
And fondly hop'd Cornelia's virtue gladly
Would have embrac'd the only means to save
At once the Roman people, and her son.

# CORNELIA.

No, Fulvius. I will once again endeavour 'To move my son to merit by submission
The senate's pardon, and his country's favour,
But neither prayers shall win, nor fraud entrap,
To aid his hateful purpose. And the fathers,
I trust, with courage and unbending firmness,
Such as becomes their station and the times,
Will guard their sacred trust.

## FULVIUS.

Relentless woman,

Whose savage fury can refuse to save
Her child from death. What eloquence can move,
When nature pleads in vain? Farewell, the gods
May hear, though thou art deaf, and the proud senate,
Should their rash fury arm the consul's hand,
Find late repentance.

# SCENE III.

CORNELIA, SERVILIA, SEMPRONIA, ATTENDANTS,

#### SERVILIA.

See, Cornelia, see

My husband hither moves. Oh let us fall Low at his feet, and with our streaming tears And fond entreaties, move his cruel mind.

CORNELIA.

I hail his presence as a joyful omen, At this important minute.

# SCENE IV.

GRACCHUS, CORNELIA, SERVILIA, SEMPRONIA, &c.

#### CORNELIA.

Once again

Thy mother, Caius, welcomes thee, unstain'd With slaughter of thy countrymen, and oh Might I add guiltless! But the laws invaded And with rash violence a sacred tribune Deposed forbid; and yet ev'n new, my Caius, Repentance may atone. A Roman's pride Above himself will tender the republic.

The senate meets. The fathers scorn repose.

Mov'd with the danger of the commonwealth.

Now summon all thy fortitude of soul,

Now by a noble conquest o'er thyself,

Deserve renown, and write thy glorious name

Among the illustrious few, through ages known,

For power despis'd, and public rights maintain'd;

Retract thy purpose, own thy fault—

GRACCHUS.

Amazement!

Is it Cornelia that would urge her son
To purchase by a vile and tame submission
Dishonourable life? The noble mind
Exults in danger, and then most assur'd
Pursues its course, when most the tempest roars.
Submit? To whom? The senate, whose ambition
Crushes the Roman people? All the spirits
Of the immortal founders of our freedom,
Brutus, Lucretius, and Poplicola,
With the Horatii hovering o'er my head,
Fill with their fires my glowing breast, and urge
My bold attempt.

CORNELIA.

No, Caius, 'tis revenge. Let Fulvius, and the partners of his guilt,

Wretches, whose vile and despicable natures Unfit for virtue, seek to rise by crimes: Let these thy headstrong passions sooth, and term thee Rome's tutelary God. Thy mother, Caius, Knows not to flatter, and her searching eye Pervades the close recesses of thy heart. 'Tis private vengeance, and ambitious pride That goads thee on. But, Caius, call to mind Those gracious qualities, by which adorn'd The people see thee, as the guiding star, Amid th' innumerous lights that blaze on high, Seems to the sad, and wandering mariner. Thy dauntless spirit, and persuasive eloquence Are public talents, lent thee by the gods, To serve the Roman state, by their decree Ordain'd thy sovereign, not to advance Thy private name and greatness, which obtain'd, What were it, but distinguish'd infamy? For not successful force, or artifice, Is virtue, and shall bear the palm of glory: But dangers brav'd, and penury, and chains, In the performance of a sacred duty.

GRACCHUS.

I do confess, and 'tis my pride, Cornelia,

I have consider'd, as the noblest motive,

A just revenge. 'Tis the distinctive mark

Which from the coward separates the brave.

I brook not injuries, and thank the gods

That they have link'd the vengeance I pursue,

With public justice, right, and liberty.

## CORNELIA,

What right, to overturn an ancient state, The dignity and order of the laws? What liberty, to give a power unlimited, Uncheck'd, unbalanc'd, to the furious rabble? What justice, to confound in one destruction The guiltless with the guilty? What revenge? Will it appease thy brother's angry ghost To sacrifice the state, for which, thou say'st, He sacrific'd his life? And with the state, His friends, his wretched mother, his poor orphans. Who, robb'd of their inheritance, the laws. The name, and the pre-eminence of Romans, Must bend before some haughty demagogue, Whom the prevailing madness of the times Shall lift to bloody sovereignty? I plead Unheard—Art thou my son?—Am I a mother? Or have the gods but mock'd me with illusions.

To pierce my tortur'd breast with keener anguish?

GRACCHUS.

Why wilt thou strive to shake my purpose thus, And nature's strongest feelings rouse, to draw My steps from honour?

SERVILIA.

Caius, at thy feet

Behold Servilia, thy most wretched wife,
Once the dear object of thy fondest love,
But now neglected, scorn'd, abandon'd—

GRACCHUS.

Rise,

My dear Servilia.

No, for ever thus

Let me remain, if Gracchus can desert me.

Here, if the gods be merciful, shall death

Close my sad eyes, ere I behold thee perish.

Oh quit thy fatal enterprize, or sheath

Thy falchion in my bosom.

GRACCHUS.

Rise, Servilia,

This is not well. Would'st thou receive me stain'd, Dishonour'd? No. I fondly hop'd, Servilia,

I was the object of a nobler love.

Art thou too leagu'd against me, in my breast
To pour unmanly softness, and to make

Ev'n virtue painful.

## CORNELIA.

Oh immortal powers,

If your immutable and dread decrees Ordain that Rome must perish, why, alas, Why was I destin'd to this depth of shame? Why must my womb teem with my country's ruin? Hear me, if thou hast any sense of pity. See These hairs, by pining sorrow render'd grey Before their time. It was my son Tiberius Poison'd my life. For I was happy once And prosperous, and honour'd. I beheld Scipio, my brother, the high capitol Ascend triumphant, Africa subdued, And Thrasymene, and Cannæ well aveng'd. Th' illustrious heir of the Cornelian house Spous'd with thy sister: great Æmilius' son, Adopted Scipio's, who outshone them both, And raz'd the towers of Carthage, and I boasted Two hopeful sons, sprung from a noble father. Oh vain delusive hopes! vain happiness!

Vain pride! Those sons pursue my wretched life,
And sink me to the grave with pain and grief.
Tiberius is no more. I fondly thought
Thou would'st have been my comfort. Spare thy mother,
My last surviving hope! What, all unmov'd!
Art thou a Roman, and can'st stab thy country!
Art thou a son, and can'st behold thy mother
Roll'd in the dust with anguish at thy feet,
And begging thee in vain for pity, pity!

GRACCHUS.

Oh nature! Oh my mother!

(He seems just yielding, and stoops to embrace her, then starts suddenly.)

Ha!-my oath-

My honour—my revenge—my soul is torn.
Support me, Gods, or let your lightnings blast me!

(He bursts from her, and goes out. Cornelia remains on the ground, exhausted by her efforts, and opprest with grief. Sempronia kneels by her, and helps to raise her. Servilia sinks weeping in the arms of her attendants.)

SEMPRONIA.

My mother, oh my mother! Ah she sinks Beneath the burthen, nor her feeble frame Supports these strong emotions! Mighty gods,
Preserve her life! oh raise thine eyes, my mother!
Oh look upon thy child, thy lov'd Sempronia!
Thou hast yet a child, Cornelia. Speak to me,
Let me not thus in one disast'rous hour
Lament a parent, and a brother lost.

# CORNELIA.

Fear not, my child. I have too long been wedded With sorrow, and familiar with misfortune.

And if thy brother could with his unkindness Have cut my thread of life, long, long ago I had been number'd with the shadowy dead.

Severe has been my trial, my afflictions, Heavy and lasting; but I bear a mind By guilt unstain'd, superior to my fate.

## AN ATTENDANT.

The senators are passing. Fulvius hither Directs his steps.

### CORNELIA.

I would avoid their presence.

Daughter, thy hand. Assist me. Oh Servilia,

We have no hope. My son, or the republic

Must perish. Come, my child, we'll weep together.

[They go out.

# SCENE IV.

FULVIUS, CÆLIUS.

FULVIUS.

Cælius, acquaint the tribune I shall watch
Over the common interest in the senate;
But I have certain notice that 'tis purpos'd
To draw the sword, and sanction violence,
And Gracchus the first victim. Muster therefore
A band of trusty, and approved friends,
To guard his person, and attend upon him
To the Comitium.

CÆLIUS.

All has been foreseen.

The citizens are arm'd. A thousand men Selected, to protect the tribune's person.

FULVIUS.

Thy country stands indebted to thy care.

CÆLIUS.

Fulvius, farewell, I'll meet thee in the forum.

[They go out.

# SCENE V. THE SENATE.

FULVIUS ENTERS, AND TAKES HIS SEAT. THE

#### OPIMIUS.

Ye conscript fathers! on each bended brow I see your country's love, and public care, Deeply engraven. Nor with other thought Here, at this silent and portentous hour, When half the world is wrap'd in night and sleep, Have I required your meeting. Sit we here An idle pageant to the gaping crowd, Or by our country's sacred laws ordain'd The guardians of the state? Our high pre-eminence, Say, is it purchas'd by ignoble flattery, By vain pretence, or simulated virtue? Or long in council exercis'd, and arms, Through burthens for the public well sustain'd, Does here th' assembled wisdom of our nation Prescribe the course of conquest, and restrain. With provident and firm deliberation, The impious licence of domestic rage; Whether ambition lift her dauntless brow, And boldly grasp at power, or with close art VOL. I.

Mining the hearts of the deluded people,
Make them the forgers of their proper chains?
If such our office when the time demands—
When every circumstance of present danger
Threatens the state, and from its deep foundation
The mighty fabric of our greatness totters;
Shall we not gird us for the proud occasion,
And vindicate the senate and the laws,
With Roman counsels and with Roman arms?
Whether to draw the public sword I bear
Against th' invaders of our civil peace,
Or see, with fruitless grief and indignation,
Our magistrates depos'd, all right, all order,
Insulted, violated, set at nought?
Determine, conscript fathers

#### FULVIUS.

I commend

The noble zeal which animates the consul.

The commonwealth in danger! Not a Roman
Who will not gladly yield his life to save it.

The Gaul is at the gate! To arms! to arms!
Wherefore deliberate, if th' occasion calls?

Yet when I look upon these sacred walls,
These robes of peace, and call to mind the name,

The venerable name we bear, the fathers, Methinks we should be met for other purpose; Than to decree the slaughter of the citizens. Attend then, fathers, fathers of the people, Whom your parental care so long has cherish'd, And by whose filial duty and obedience Sustain'd, the senate awes the subject world. Why should the public sword be rais'd to smite them? What is their crime? The people's right, oh fathers, Stands on one base with your authority, The law and constitution of the state. What legal magistrate have they resisted? What law invaded? What aspiring leader Lifted above the reach of just control? But that I know the virtue of Opimius, Untainted with ambition, void of pride, This fierce proposal, 'midst profoundest peace, Might raise suspicion-

#### OPIMIUS.

Silence, vile dissembler.

Fathers, forgive that I should violate
Your ancient course, and order of proceeding,
To break upon a senator's discourse
With hasty interruption. But, by heaven

Thus long detected treason had not trampled Upon your patience, and abus'd your ears With specious lies, and vile dissimulation, But that amazement chain'd my just resentment: Wretch, dost thou dream thy dark and secret practice, Impenetrably veil'd, has mov'd unnotic'd To overturn the state? And hast thou measur'd The senate's vigilance, and wise precaution, By the slight councils of thy factious herd? Thy guilt is public. All thy ruffians armed; A chosen band to guard the tribune's person; Another to possess Mount Aventine, Under thy leading, Fulvius. Conscript fathers, What, shall we wait till war invades our houses, And murder riots in our noblest blood. And to the capitol the flames ascend? Mars, the armipotent, descends to lead us; Quirinus calls us to preserve his city; And hark, the omens of all-ruling Jove

[It thunders.

Prescribe our conduct, and proclaim our justice.

A SENATOR.

Why longer hesitate? The danger's evident, Our country calls us, and the gods have spoken. SENATORS.

Pronounce th' accustom'd order.

THE OFFICER OF THE SENATE.

Let the consul

Defend the commonwealth from injury.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

# ACT V. SCENE I.

# SCENE, THE HOUSE OF GRACCHUS.

GRACCHUS, CÆLIUS.

GRACCHUS.

CÆLIUS.

This hasty resolution of the senate,

Being known thus early, may against themselves,

Recoil. Say, Cælius, are our friends appointed.

To seize the forum ere the morning dawn?

Ev'n now the morning dawns, and long ere this From all the different quarters of the city

The people have been moving. Ere the senate
Broke up their meeting, did I pass the forum,
Where many of our friends possessed already

The rostra, and the front of the comitium.

GRACCHUS.

'Tis well. The chosen band which must attend me ?

They are array'd, and wait but your appearance.

"Twere well the persons of distinguish'd note Upon our party, on this great occasion, Appear'd companions in th' assembly. Folvius Promis'd to join me here. For Mutius Scævola, Go seek him, Cælius, and prevail upon him To share the common danger.

#### CÆLIUS.

I obey.

But well thou know'st his cautious temper. Believe it,
We must not look to be assisted by him.
This show of resolution in the senate,
Which seems to me the offspring of despair,
Has quench'd his zeal.

## CAIUS GRACCHUS.

Valerius will be here,

Decius, Arruntius, Curius, and Muræna: Their brave example, Cælius, will excite Or shame him into action. Fare thee well.

# SCENE II.

GRACCHUS ALONE.

Upon the brow of morn unwonted mist
Sits dark—Oh for an augur's skill, which might
Interpret this to good!—And 'twas but late
Portentous meteors glar'd athwart the sky,
And boding thunders shook the vault of heaven.

They do not move unbidden. These are the dread precursors of the Fates, And with such omens do th' immortal gods Appal the wretches they have mark'd to die. Why sinks my spirit? These disastrous signs Are given not less to Opimius than to me-The thunder sounds as sullen to his ears. The lightning flashes on his eyes, and if The morning frowns on me, it frowns on him. Oh, would our friends were come! This interval Harrows my soul with painful thoughts. Some hours, Some few short hours on rapid pinions flown, The spirit of Tiberius, on the bank Of that abhorred flood which bounds the dead, The partner, not th' avenger of his fate, Shall greet.—But hence with this unmanly fear; What baleful influence weighs upon my heart, And withers all my strength? Why not prevail? Th' event of war's uncertain - Who can pierce The secrets of the Fates? I'll think no more. Or death, or victory, alike unseen Move to their purpose. Would our friends were come!

<sup>2</sup> See Shakspeare's Richard III.

# SCENE III.

GRACCHUS, SERVILIA.

Servilia! 'Tis the still and solemn hour
When only dark conspiracy should wake.
Why hast thou left thy bed, my gentle love,
Where the soft arms of sleep should yet enfold thee,
To join the restless councils of ambition,
And mark the moody temper of revenge?

#### SERVILIA

Alas, my Caius, not to proud ambition,
And fierce revenge alone, doth balmy sleep
Deny his soothing power, but faithful love
Bedews her nightly couch with streaming tears.

# GRACCHUS.

Tempt me no more—Dear though thou art, more dear Than is the vital stream that heaves my heart; My soul is fix'd. My honour stands engaged.

And I will hold that person for my foe Who strives to shake my purpose.

## SERVILIA.

Oh, my Caius,

I am not come, I call the gods to witness,
I am not come to draw thee from thy purpose.
Too well I know that unrelenting heart.

I am not come to sigh and weep before thee. Fain would I check these tears, that fall unnotic'd; But oh deny not, in this mournful hour, My eyes to gaze upon thee. Never more, Oh, never more shall I behold thee, Caius; Nor ever more thy voice shall charm my ear, Nor ever more my lips be join'd with thine. I know my anguish cannot move thy pity, And I would hide my weakness from thy sight. Alas, what bitter misery awaits me! Oh could I die, since hope itself is lost! I dare not beg my husband to preserve me, My husband slights my prayers, and mocks my sorrow. He who should sooth, and comfort, and support, He is the author of the woes I suffer. O whither shall I fly by him deserted?

GRACCHUS.

By me deserted! Oh, my best Servilia, Not death can tear me from thee; my last pulse Shall beat for thee, my latest sigh be thine.

SERVILIA.

Is there then hope? Thou wilt not leave me, Caius.
GRACCHUS.

What would'st thou have?

### SERVILIA.

It is Servilia prays thee

To rescue her from misery and death.

GRACCHUS.

My word is past. You wring my soul in vain.

# SCENE IV.

GRACCHUS, SERVILIA, FULVIUS.

FULVIUS.

Our friends are all assembled, and demand Thy presence. In the throng'd Comitium reigns Impatience.

SERVILIA.

Oh my Gracchus, do not go.

FULVIUS.

If thou delay'st, their ardour may abate;
A thousand dangers threat the common cause.
The senate may surprize us, or prevail
To turn the people's temper.

GRACCHUS.

Fare thee well,

My dear Servilia! let thy pious prayers
Win the just gods to crown us with success.

SERVILIA.

And canst thou leave me thus?

GRACCHUS.

Fulvius, lead on.

SERVILIA.

Yet, yet a moment stay. Sempronia claims

A last embrace, Cornelia too, thy mother —

GRACCHUS.

My country calls me hence, my just revenge,
My honour, and my safety. Oh Servilia,
Why wilt thou damp my hopes of victory
With these ill-boding tears, these fond complaints?
Prepare, my love, to welcome my return.
A little space restores me to thine arms,
And gives our future hours to love and joy.

[Gracchus and Fulvius go out.

# SCENE 'V.

SERVILIA, ATTENDANTS.

A little space! Alas, we part for ever.

I never more must welcome thy return.

I never more shall dwell upon thy name

With fond delight, and listen to thy praise;

For not in glorious battle shalt thou fall,

With all thy country's vows to grace thine urn.

I might perhaps have drawn a mournful comfort

From that reflection, as when thou wert absent

Before Numantia. All is darkness now,

And horror and despair. Oh, cruel fate,

All, all the blessings of my former life,

What are they now? Ye minutes, wing'd with raptures,

Whither, ah whither are ye flown? And never,

Never to come again. Yet in remembrance

Still are ye present. Every fond endearment,

Each kiss, each word, each look, to sorrow gives

More keen regret, more anguish to despair.

# ATTENDANT.

Wherefore, Servilia, art thou thus ingenious
To find new topics, and new springs of grief?
Rather seek comfort. Do not say, your Gracchus
Must perish, you must never see him more.
He may return. Dwell on that pleasing thought.
The will of heaven is yet unknown, and sorrow
And black misfortune never come too late.

#### SERVILIA.

Such comfort as th' exhausted wretch escap'd

From shipwreck knows, when from the wave-worn rock

To which he clung, the surge at length subsides,

And as he throws his anxious eyes around,
No object meets him but the low'ring sky,
And roaring sea, where his brave vessel perish'd
Such comfort finds Servilia. Worse than death,
Evils surround me. Death my only hope,
Where no relief, and no escape appears:

#### ATTENDANT.

Observe Cornelia. Let her great example Teach thee to bear the cruel blows of fortune:

## SERVILIA.

Cornelia soars above the human race,
And weighs against maternal love th' affection
She bears the commonwealth. I am a woman,
A poor weak woman. All my sex's softness
Melts in my breast, and all my soul is love.
When I have lost my Gracchus, all the world
To me is lost, and to the silent urn,
The sole companion of my mournful days,
Grief must conduct me. Do not talk of comfort.
I never can know pleasure; never taste
Of comfort, but in grief. Grief shall recal
The image of my Gracchus, and I'll sit
And think I see him still, and hear his voice,
And tell with what a tender truth I love him:

Thus may I sooth my suffering soul awhile;
Thus dream of blessings, till the fond illusion
Melt into air, and then I'll weep again.b

ATTENDANT.

Behold, Cornelia.

# SCENE VI.

SERVILIA, CORNELIA, SEMPRONIA, ATTENDANTS.

SERVILIA.

Oh he's gone, Cornelia;
He's gone for ever. They have led him hence
A victim to the slaughter. The patricians,
The cruel senate has decreed his death.
This was the end of their nocturnal meetings.
Well might they hide beneath the veil of darkness
Their horrible purpose. Oh relentless tyrants!
Could not Tiberius' blood their fury satiate;
But must their hate the whole Sempronian name
Pursue? Alas, I rave, I talk to her,
The senate's advocate, who can approve
The sentence which condemns her son to death.

CORNELIA.

Alas, my child, I pity and forgive thee.

b See the part of Constance in Shakspeare's King John.

Sempronia, sooth the tempest of her grief,
Our pain is light to hers. Love keeps the soul
Alive to keenest woe. More poignant therefore
The widow's than the mother's pang of grief.

## SEMPRONIA.

I cannot speak to her. My bursting heart

Is full. My sister! my Servilia!

# SERVILIA.

What have I said? What has my frenzy utter'd? Have I thy venerable grief insulted,
And with new anguish pierc'd thy tortur'd breast?
Oh pardon me, oh take me to thy bosom!
Impart some portion of thy virtue; teach me
Patience——

# CORNELIA.

Come to my arms, poor mourner, come.

I cannot comfort thee, but I will join

My tears with thine, and answer sigh for sigh.

And yet, they say, the soul oppress'd with grief

Finds, in th' example of some great affliction,

The spring of courage. Look on me, my child.

I once was with a noble husband join'd.

In prime of life he died, and then I wept

As thou dost now, and fondly thought I suffer'd

Th' extreme of anguish. Yet I view'd my boys
With secret joy, then growing up to manhood.
Those boys have been my curse. The elder perish'd,
Shaking with faction the republic's safety.
E'er since that fatal time, what anxious cares,
What fears have my maternal bosom rent!
My last surviving son now stands upon
The slippery verge of ruin. Yet I weep not
That he is doom'd to die. That is the lot
Ordained of our nature. Would to heaven
I did not mourn his guilt!

### SERVILIA.

I will be patient.

I will not tax the justice of the gods,
But bear my fortune with an equal mind;
And if officious memory recall
My ravish'd joys, the torrent will have way,
But I will weep in silence.

## CORNELIA.

Oh my daughter! Haply, for hope still sooths the mind of woe With fond illusion, some propitious power. With pitying eye may view thee, and avert The ruin which impends.

#### SEMPRONIA.

My brother never (For he is firm, and resolute of soul)
Will bend before the senate. But his friends
Are numerous and brave. The chance of war
Uncertain. Never shall my soul despair.
He may prevail.

## CORNELIA.

The gods forbid, Sempronia;
Recall the word. Shall we a single life
Prize c'er the safety of the commonwealth?
Nor rather weep a son, and brother lost,
Than all the Roman name?

## SERVILIA.

Oh heaven, what cry,

What dreadful cry is that?

# SEMPRONIA.

Thus still the people

Speak their rude approbation, and exult, When on their wishes fair success attends.

#### SERVILIA.

That the triumphant shout of fair success?

The note of approbation? Ruin rather.

Again!—It is the sound of war!—I hear

The clash of arms! I hear the dying groan!

#### SEMPRONIA.

Horror! The tempest grows! It is, indeed,
The sound of battle! Oh my beating heart!

CORNELIA.

How dreadful is the moment of suspense!

Suspense! Alas, our misery is certain.

I see my Caius dragg'd along the ground,
Pierc'd with a thousand wounds! I see his blood!

He writhes in death; his ghastly eye-balls roll!

[Continued shouts that die away gradually.

#### CORNELIA.

Immortal powers!—But wherefore should I pray?
What mercy can my trembling voice intreat
From your eternal thrones? My son must perish,
Or the republic. Wretched either way;
To me the chance of war is not uncertain.
Affliction is the lot of our frail nature;
But I have been reserv'd a sad example
To future times, a monument of woe.
The gods themselves, all powerful as they are,
The gods themselves cannot relieve my sorrow.
I dare not ask their aid. I cannot pray
My son should live, and the republic perish.

I cannot pray for safety to the state, For then my son must die.c

SEMPRONIA.

Behold, Duilius!

# SCENE VII.

CORNELIA, SERVILIA, SEMPRONIA, ATTENDANTS,
DUILIUS.

SERVILIA.

Speak not, Duilius. On thy brow I read

Thy dreadful tale. I know my husband's fallen;

And yet perhaps my 'boding tears are vain.

CORNELIA.

Come you from the comitium?

DUILIUS.

Noble matron,

I come, the witness of a scene of horror.

The forum's stain'd with blood. The dead and dying

Cover our streets; nor yet from civil slaughter

The sword abstains; but through the affrighted city

Romans with Romans mix in guilty fight,

And fall by mutual wounds.

s See Shakspeare's Coriolanus.

CORNELIA.

Upon what party

Began th' affray?

DUILIUS.

One of the Tribunes' guard,

By hasty zeal, and rash resentment fir'd,
A favourer of the senate, who revil'd
The noble Gracchus as he pass'd along,
Struck to the ground. As on a signal given,
The consul binding up his robe exclaims,
Let all to whom the commonwealth is dear
Defend it now. The fathers rose at once
With all their clients arm'd, and half the city
That to their party clung.

CORNELIA.

What of my son?

DUILIUS.

He fled-

SERVILIA.

He is escap'd! My Gracchus lives!

Why must my tongue unfold what yet remains?

Deserted by the people, left expos'd

To the relentless fury of his enemies,

I saw him fall beneath repeated blows;

1 saw him perish.

[Servilia faints.]

SEMPRONIA.

Oh, ill-fated brother!

CORNELIA. (After a pause.)

'Tis past! The measure of my woe is full.

DUILIUS.

I would speak comfort to thee, but my soul
Is charg'd with grief. Oh be thyself, Cornelia!

Support this dreadful blow, my dearest mother; My love and filial care shall sooth thy anguish.

# CORNELIA.

Mourn not for me. I shall be soon at rest.

The gods, in pity to the woes of man,
Have given us death a common benefit;
And they have rescu'd me from that calamity
Which most I dreaded, to behold my son,
Fruit of my womb, and nurtur'd by my care,
O'erturn the state. The senate has done nobly.
Prais'd be the gods! The commonwealth is sav'd.

\*\*\* THE Author was originally led to make choice of this subject for the following reasons. The character of Gracchus himself is great and illustrious. He was eminently gifted by nature. Brave, liberal, and beneficent; distinguished for military talents, and the most eloquent and popular man of his time. His ambition was not sordid. He might mistake the constitution of the Roman government, and, if his plans had been successful, he might have destroyed his country; but his intention was evidently to extend and vindicate the freedom of the people. He was resisted by the great body of the Roman nobility, who contended not for any end of private ambition, much less to support the despotism of a tyrant, but to maintain the laws as they had received them from their ancestors, and the authority of a senate, composed of men who had been formed for war and government, in the active service of the public; of all the most eminent in the knowledge and practice of the law, in the administration of every department of the state, and in the conduct of armies; who had sustained the state by their counsels, increased it by their victories, adorned and secured it by their legislation. The existence and perfection of such a state, was a concern of the highest importance to the human race. The whole habitable world to the remotest posterity must be affected by it. In addition to these, the principal actors in the great business of this drama, history has transmitted to us the interesting and elevated character of the mother of the Gracchi. Her maternal affection was manifested by her

unremitting care of the tender years of her children, but it was of the noblest kind. She loved her offspring rather for the virtues which she had planted in their minds, than for the casual circumstances of their birth; and while she devoted her life to the care of their fortunes and the cultivation of their hearts and minds, she did not forget that she had other duties, and was bound not only as a parent to her children, but as a citizen to her country. It seemed to me that such a subject, and such characters, must strongly interest all the friends of virtue, which consists in the steady adherence to principles of duty, and a generous disdain of danger and suffering; and that it should peculiarly interest the British people, whose greatest boast it is that they are free. But liberty is not a state of torpid apathy, and virtue exists in activity, not in indolent repose. Knowledge is not intuitive, but produced by experience and vigorous discussion. The clashing opinions therefore of great, enlightened, and public spirited men, must produce instruction and elicit truth, and the casual violence which may proceed from such a source, if it should occasion partial evil to some of the existing generation, may in its consequences be greatly and perpetually beneficial to mankind.

The characters of Gracchus, Opimius, and Cornelia, present images of virtue, such as has been found upon earth, such as ought to be felt and practised, and such as may yet exist; and the softness of Servilia, in the situation in which she appears, is not inconsistent with magnanimity and firmness, equal to what is displayed

by Cornelia, if the being placed in similar circumstances had called for a similar exertion of those qualities. Such surely are the proper subjects of tragedy; such ought to be the subjects of all poetry, rather than by a false colouring of effeminate weakness, exaggerated by every rhetorical art to corrupt and enervate the minds of all succeeding generations. It remains only to be stated, that there are in two or three places a few lines which bear a strong similitude to passages in Shakspeare's King John, Coriolanus, and Richard III. Whether this happened from an unconscious recollection of those passages, or from the natural occurrence of similar expressions in describing similar situations, the Author does not know; but he determined at any rate to let the verses stand, and nearly as he first wrote them. He might be proud to have fallen upon thoughts or expressions bearing any resemblance to Shakspeare, but he certainly could not be ashamed to have borrowed from him.



# MONIMIA.

Τόν τοι τύραννον εὐσεδεῖν εἰ ράδιον. Σοφοκ. Αἴ. μας. 1367.

# PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Mithridates, King of Pontus.

Suræna, his minister and favourite.

Leander, disguised under the name of Arbaces.

Phocyas, his friend.

Mithranes, Pharneucus, 

Officers belonging to the army of Mithridates.

Roman Ambassadors.

Monimia, a Grecian, Wife of Mithridates.

Cleone, her principal attendant.

Roxana, Statira, Sisters of Mithridates.

SCENE, a Palace with Gardens near the Camp of Mithridates, and the Royal Pavilion in the Camp.

# MONIMIA.

# ACT I. SCENE I. THE GARDEN OF THE PALACE.

MONIMIA, HER ATTENDANTS.

(Soft music.)

MONIMIA.

No more, my virgins. To Monimia's ear

Music in vain her dulcet note applies.

Unheeded each melodious sound decays,

Or with infectious tenderness pervades,

And opens all the soul to pensive grief.

And you, enchanting scenes and roseate bowers,

Fit dwelling for the laughter-loving dame,

You point the stings of woe, and every breeze,

Still as his dewy pinions sweep the flowers,

Sighs gently for the blessings I have lost.

Oh, the vain splendor of the painful throne!

Oh, pomp and greatness, dearly bought with peace!

And yet, lov'd dwellings of my early youth; Ye tranquil solitudes, ye lowly roofs, Where thoughtless and secure my childhood play'd; Witness, if e'er Monimia's humble mind Form'd one rash wish beyond your calm enjoyments. Poor simple maid! I little knew of grandeur, And trembled at his proud and fierce demeanour. No restless passion taught my breast to heave; Ev'n love's soft tumults, and delightful pains, My tender age had learn'd as yet to fear, But from the moving tale of others woe. Ah why, ye authors of Monimia's being, Why did you drag your trembling, weeping child, Whose timid, helpless innocence repos'd Her hopes in you, a victim to the altar? Oh, how I shudder'd at the fiery glance With which the monarch met my bashful eyes! How oft I would have said, (but ah, I dar'd not) Send me, oh send me to my fields again!

#### CLEONE.

Forgive me, royal mistress, if my tongue Reprove these sallies of unreason'd grief. How many in the rural calm retreat Sigh for Monimia's state.

#### MONIMIA.

Alas, Cleone!

Talk not of reason. Can her feeble power
Suppress the instinct of unerring nature,
Which tells me I am wretched? Oh ye gods,
Are there who envy misery like mine?
For such I have yet a tear. But hence, my maidens,
Hence to your sports, nor let your mistress' sorrow
O'ercast the fleeting brightness of your day.
Cleone shall attend me. She best knows
To touch the strings of comfort, and divert
The gloomy thoughts which prey upon my soul.

# SCENE II.

MONIMIA, CLEONE.

#### CLEONE.

Now that each prying eye, and curious ear,
Is far remov'd, oh let Cleone learn
Monimia's secret grief, and share her pain!
Share or relieve it. Much can prudent counsel
To ward misfortune's dart, and lenient speech
To heal the wound it gives.

MONIMIA.

My secret grief?

Alas, Cleone, thy Monimia's sorrows Are gross and palpable to every eye! I have a heart for softness fram'd, and love, The throne to me is barren of delight; It is the seat of cruelty or pride. Remorseless cruelty, unfeeling pride. What boots it me that subject nations wait Upon my state, and kiss the dust I tread? What heart, in all those thousands, towards Monimia Springs with delight? I share the secret curse Which the vex'd people breathe against their lord. Oh I had rather far with thee, Cleone, Unseen, unheard of, live remote from men, And woo the beasts to bear me company, Or tend some sapling in the leafy grove, Some shrub my hand had planted, with fond care, Than be the wretch I am, a trembling slave, A tyrant's toy, when brutal instinct goads.

CLEONE.

'Tis true, the stern and warlike Mithridates

Loves with a soldier's plainness; yet he loves thee,

And with increasing ardour.

MONIMIA.

Love, Cleone?

Love never pierc'd that rude and savage breast,
My tears awake his fury, not his pity:
He ne'er unbends his brow to look on me,
Nor gently with the voice of kindness woos me,
But with imperious tone commands his slave,
Or mocks my pensive grief with harsh upbraidings.

#### CLEONE.

I know thy meek and gentle mind has groan'd Beneath his roughness long, with silent patience:
But now impetuous grief invades thy bosom.
Say whence this change? Let not concealment prey Upon thy soul. Oh let me share thy anguish!
Or is Cleone exil'd from thy friendship?

# MONIMIA.

Oh 'tis in vain, 'tis all in vain, Cleone,
We struggle to repress our native feelings.
They will have way, and the desponding wretch
Sooths his fierce torment only by complainings.
Oft have I bath'd my midnight couch with tears,
Oft have the conscious night and secret bower
Borne witness to the anguish of my soul.
But wherefore should I struggle with my grief?
Ah, what relief does patient suffering find!
Each day, each hour, but sharpens my distress,

And shews what fond delusion is in hope.

Oh, rather let a keener woe o'erwhelm me,

Beneath whose violence this feeble frame

May sink, that peace may fold me in the tomb!

GLEONE.

E'er since our escort, on the march from Pergamus,
Was by the Roman force surpriz'd, your sorrows
Have swell'd tempestuous. Some conceal'd distress,
Some dark mysterious cause——

#### MONIMIA.

Behold, Cleone,

How fate pursues me with remorseless rage.

My weary soul dwelt on one pleasing thought.

The gallant Grecian youth who fought so nobly,
And but for whose intrepid deed, Monimia

Had been in triumph rudely dragg'd, the sport

Of a vile rabble in the Roman street:

That gallant youth—I fondly hop'd my gratitude

Might lift him to a high and splendid fortune;
But he eludes my search—Ne'er since the day

When to the palace of the Pontic kings

He led us, have my eyes beheld his person,

Nor has Leander's name attain'd my ear.

CLEONE.

It is the soldier's fortune; and whom victory
To day with all her fairest wreaths adorns,
The next, some stronger arm or random dart
Shall number with the dead. Doubtless he fell
In some succeeding action.

MONIMIA.

Powers of heaven !

CLEONE.

You tremble and turn pale.

MONIMIA.

What didst thou say?

That he is fallen in battle?

CLEONE.

He has not

Been heard of since the day he rescu'd us.

I say 'tis probable he's fall'n in battle.

MONIMIA.

I have enough of misery already.

I'll not believe it. Yet if still he liv'd,

Would not the actions of so brave a warrior

Have been the theme of every tongue? Alas,

Thou art too true an harbinger of ill!

CLEONE.

Oh my lov'd mistress, thy ingenuous mind
Betrays its feelings, and this sudden passion,
Thy heaving breast, thy varying cheek, thine eye
Glist'ning with tears, more forcible than speech,
Unfold thy tender tale. Thou lov'st! Leander
Reigns in thine heart.

MONIMIA.

Oh say not so, Cleone.

For sure the anguish of despairing love
Is insupportable. I was before
Most wretched among women. Oh, I dare not,
I dare not love, Cleone!

CLEONE.

Were Monimia

Yet mistress of her choice to love or not,
My tongue might warn to shun the soft delusion.
But every tingling vein has drunk the poison,
And all thy soul is love.

MONIMIA.

A stranger youth

Might with his graceful form and gentle manners
Allure attention; but our love, Cleone,

Reluctant yields at length to prayers and sighs, Not to the light impression of a moment. And then the pride of royal state—

CLEONE.

Even now

Monimia could despise it. 'Tis a feather Which love in sport would to the winds abandon, And smile to see the bauble fleet away.

# MONIMIA.

Ah why, Cleone, wilt thou force my soul
To know its sorrows? Rather should'st thou strive
A little while to cheat with fond illusion
My dazzled sense, and stifle dangerous thought.
Tell me I do not love, prove 'tis impossible.
Dress out in gorgeous phrase of eloquence
My envied state. Shew, if thou canst, the throne
All bright with varied pleasure, and Content,
Forsaking the poor peasant's humble shed
To fix her mansion there. Do this, and I
Will worship thee. The gods themselves, Cleone,
Want power for this. To hopeless misery
They have condemn'd Monimia, and have left her
No refuge but the tomb. Oh, bear me thither!

CLEONE.

Yield not to rash despair. There is as yet No cause.

MONIMIA.

Didst thou not say erewhile, Cleone, Leander fell in battle?

CLEONE.

Since the hour

He rescu'd us, no tidings of his fate

Have reach'd my ear. Perhaps he lives, perhaps
In yonder camp, with equal flames inspir'd,
Weeping he sighs forth his Monimia's name,
Nor dares to hope that she repays his passion,
With tear for tear responsive, sigh for sigh.

MONIMIA.

Perhaps he lives! If so, Monimia lives.

Hope plays about me with her golden beams,

And Fate may lead my steps by ways unknown

To peace, long sought in vain.

CLEONE.

Confide in me

To seek him with unwearied care, and soon Tidings of joyful import shalt thou hear. Meanwhile with varied sports beguile the hours Of expectation.—But behold, the king.

MONIMIA.

Alas my wounded soul will ill sustain

His awful presence, and imperious frown!

Let us retire, Cleone.

CLEONE.

'Tis too late.

He comes.

# SCENE III.

MITHRIDATES ENTERS ATTENDED. MONIMIA LEANING ON CLEONE ADVANCES SLOWLY, AND WITH
DOWNCAST EYES, TO MEET HIM. SHE INCLINES
HERSELF TO HIM; HE WITHOUT REGARDING HER
TURNS TO SURÆNA AND SPEAKS.

# MITHRIDATES.

Impossible! A banish'd fugitive
Refuse th' alliance of the king of Pontus!
And insolently bid me bend the knee
Before the senate he disdains to own!

SURÆNA.

The stubborn pride of these aspiring Romans Grows in adversity, which breaks the spirit Of other men. But whom the gods have mark'd For vengeance, they deprive of prudent counsel.

# MITHRIDATES.

What, when the portals of his native city

Are clos'd against him, and the throng'd Comitium

Marks him a public enemy, and bids

The legions move against him, then, ev'n then,

His haughty mind would trample upon kings!

# SURÆNA.

Great prince, thy faithful armies but attend Thy mandate to chastise his arrogance.

# MITHRIDATES.

Whence is his confident and daring spirit?

Am I not lord of all the fruitful shore
On which the Euxine roars? The Hellespont,
And all Ionia's proud and wealthy cities
Confess my sway: and yet, a Roman outlaw,
Whose followers not exceed the twentieth part
Which peoples any province of my empire,
Spurns at my friendship, and defies my power;
Nay threatens me——

# SURÆNA.

My lord, the queen attends.

#### MITHRIDATES.

Monimia—Why these tears? this clouded brow?

Thus dost thou greet thy husband and thy sovereign

With sullen discontent, and eyes averted?

MONIMIA.

Oh sir, your awful presence fills my soul With fear; forgive a timid woman's weakness.

#### MITHRIDATES.

Specious dissembler, thy rebellious spirit
Still murmurs disobedience to my will;
Still meets my proffer'd love with cold disdain,
Forgetful of the bounteous hand which rais'd thee
To share the envied splendour of the throne.

#### MONIMIA.

Monimia's humble duty, mighty prince—
MITHRIDATES.

Reply not; cares of empire claim me now.

Go, and enjoy the absence of thy lord

With light disport and idle merriment.

Perhaps when night leads on the hours of ease,

We may unbend our majesty awhile

And view your revels. Prove thy duty then,

Nor with this wayward mood, these sighs and tears,

Disturb our purpos'd joy. Retire. The state Needs not a woman's counsel.

# SCENE IV.

MITHRIDATES, SURÆNA.

#### MITHRIDATES.

I will crush

At length this proud republic, now that faction
Shakes, with intestine broils, her deep foundations,
And mines her strength, and damps her vigorous councils.
This daring rebel half her veteran legions
Draws to his party. All th' allies are wavering,
Cut off from aid, alone, without supply,
And all his views bent upon Italy.
Him shall my numbers crush. Then, then, at length,
Our Asiatics may awake to glory,
And borrowing virtue from their foes, my standard
Plant in th' astonish'd forum, and the capitol
Confess a nobler victor than the Gaul.

#### SURÆNA.

To me, most mighty sovereign, it appears

Th' immortal powers have destin'd to thy sceptre

The prostrate world; and hence does fierce dissension

Shake to its deep-laid basis that proud state,
Which only could oppose thee: and I own,
'Twere great and noble with a warrior arm
To pluck the laurel from the dreaded shrine
Of capitolian Jove. Yet Pallas reigns
Not less o'er prudent counsels than o'er arms,
And Marş the homicide still falls before her.

#### MITHRIDATES.

What would thy coward policy suggest?

Sylla, this rash and banish'd fugitive
Is all unworthy of the king's resentment.
Let him rush headlong on his own destruction,
Yet in his ruin shall he wound his country,
An easy conquest after. Thou, meanwhile,
Accord with the proconsul in Eithynia
The truce he asks, and turn thy arms against
The rugged Sarmatæ, and hardy Dacians.
Their valour shall inure thy troops to war;
Their power never can thy state endanger.
And when at every vein exhausted Italy
Pours forth her strength—

MITHRIDATES.

What! Shall inaction chain me

Till, her domestic feuds compos'd, her legions With veteran bravery shall invade my confines? No, I will crush her now.

SURÆNA.

Dread sir, your troops

So oft have fled before them—

MITHRIDATES.

There thou wound'st me.

Oh had the gods but given to Mithridates

Some rude and barren district 'mid the rocks

Of Caucasus, and fifty thousand Romans,

Ere this my conquering sword had spread my sway

O'er twice as many nations twice th' extent

Of fertile regions, crown'd with wealthy cities,

As bow to my hereditary sceptre,

And as my fortune has in war achiev'd.

But these enervate Asiatic cowards——

SURÆNA.

Have freely bled. Superior discipline,
And not superior valour, has o'ercome them.
But oh, dread sovereign, might thy slave presume
To speak——

MITHRIDATES.

Say on, and fearless. Dost thou think

My soul delights in servile flattery?

Or that the spirit which informs my breast
Shrinks from the paintings of another's fear?

SURÆNA.

The people, by continual war exhausted, Groan with their burthens, and implore the gods To bend thee from thy purpose.

MITHRIDATES.

Ha! Rebellion?

SURÆNA.

Oh king, thou wrong'st their faith. Their lives are thine:

But thus by myriads to the slaughter led, The sinews of thy strength will fail. The gods Look down with pity from their blest abodes, When wretched mortals perish.

# MITHRIDATES.

Dost thou dream

The powers of heaven forsake their blissful rest
To count the lives of peasants? Nameless reptiles.
They crawl unnotic'd through their little space,
While the great gods, in awful synod, doom
The fate of nations, whose collective being
May tread on time, and be like them immortal.

Th' exalted few whose hands support the sceptre;
Are ministers of heaven. The common herd
Their instruments of action. Yet in this,
Favour'd beyond desert, if led to conquest,
They share their master's glory; in defeat,
Their vileness not admits of infamy.
No more. Thy counsels have been heard. Our purpose
Stands on determin'd reason.

#### SURÆNA.

Be thy will

In all obey'd, and still may victory,

Conquest, and power attend upon thy state.

# MITHRIDATES.

Yet is it not the thirst of boundless sway,

Nor the vain whistling of a name, for which

I pour the people's blood, and I would gladly,

After so many years of warlike toil,

Awhile possess repose. But who, Suræna,

Who shall suspend th' ambition of the Romans?

Not ev'n domestic discord checks its progress.

The capitol is shook with civil arms,

And still they grasp at conquest. Ev'n their rebels,

Their very rebels, banish'd and proscrib'd,

Postpone their vengeance to their country's greatness,

I will not bend before them, nor my people Shall bear a foreign yoke.

SURÆNA.

The gods forbid!

MITHRIDATES.

And do my subjects murmur? Let them view Their sovereign. Not effeminating ease,
And slothful dalliance in the lap of pleasure,
Engage my hours; but toil, and care, and dangers.
Me too domestic ills invade. Ev'n now
Suspicion shakes my breast. My soul disdains
The passion which it yields to. But 'tis fate
Controls alike the monarch and the slave,
And pain and sorrow is the common doom.
Hast thou of late observ'd the queen?

SURÆNA.

My lord!

MITHRIDATES.

Hast thou observ'd the queen?

SURÆNA.

Thy slave presumes not,

Unbidden, with inquiring eye to view The steps of majesty!

# MITHRIDATES.

A woman's love

Moves not my mind, or with too light a breeze

To shake the settled temper of my bosom.

But should a subject's insolent desires

Invade my pleasures, and her abject soul,

Whose brows distinguish'd by my choice, the diadem

Adorns, swerve but in thought, my hand in vain

Bears not the sceptre.

SURÆNA.

I am lost in wonder.

MITHRIDATES.

E'er since upon the march from Pergamus,
The queen, her escort by a troop of Romans
Surpris'd, and scatter'd, from captivity
Was rescu'd by Leander, she appears
Opprest with grief, nor only with reserve,
And coyness meets me, but with bursting tears.
Leander too, the Mitylenian captain,
Distinguish'd for his valour by my favour,
And for that bold exploit to greater honours,
Command, and trust design'd, some few days after
Forsook the camp, nor has he since been heard of.

SURÆNA.

Fickle and faithless still the Greeks are found. Perhaps he serves upon the Roman party.

MITHRIDATES.

Among my guards I have observ'd of late

A graceful youth. His courage and his skill

In martial exercise first drew my notice.

Arbaces is his name.

SURÆNA.

A gallant soldier.

MITHRIDATES.

But late I mark'd him with attentive eye.

Sudden, confusion flush'd his guilty cheek,
He turn'd his head, and with his lifted shield

Strove to conceal his face. I knew Leander.

SURÆNA.

Leander!

MITHRIDATES.

Attend. Do thou select him from the rest,
And on some specious plausible pretext,
Give access to the queen. Observe them closely.
If my surmise be true, 'tis an occasion
Passion will not pass by. Perhaps Leander
Alone is guilty, and the queen nor favours,

Nor knows his rash pretensions.

SURÆNA.

Mighty prince,

Thy servant lives but to obey thy voice.

# SCENE V.

MITHRIDATES, SURÆNA, AN OFFICER.

OFFICER.

The gods preserve the royal Mithridates, And be thy glory and thy reign eternal! The Roman deputies, my sovereign lord, Attend to know thy pleasure.

MITHRIDATES.

In the camp,

Ere the mid day, they may approach our presence.

Meanwhile the troops which lately join'd our army
From Colchis and Iberia, and the bands
Of hardy horsemen from the Tauric region,
We shall survey. Upon thy vigilance
And active zeal, Suræna, in the affair
Committed to thy care, we shall rely.

SURÆNA.

The sun, new ris'n beyond the eastern hill,

Shall not again his gloomy wheels allay In ocean ere thy orders be fulfill'd.

MITHRIDATES.

So prosper, as thou serv'st me.

OFFICER TO THOSE WITHOUT.

Bow your ensigns,

And let the trumpets sound. The king comes forth.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

# ACT II. SCENE I.

# THE GARDEN OF THE PALACE.

LEANDER, DISGUISED AS AREACES; PHOCYAS, ALSO DISGUISED.

#### LEANDER.

Thus far propitious Venus guides my steps.

These are the favour'd scenes, whose green retreats
Enfold Monimia's beauties. These sweet flowers
That scent the ambient air, glad earth sends forth
To court the soft touch of her tender feet.

Oft have her lucid eyes delighted dwelt
Upon their painted foliage, and her hand
May gently woo them from their native couch,
To gather fragrance from her heavenly breast.
But they are all insensible of bliss,
While I——

#### PHOCYAS.

Restrain thine ecstasies, Leander;
They will betray thee. Think what jealous guard
Surrounds the place.

LEANDER.

Phocyas has never lov'd

Has never known the transport which invades
With unresisted force the swelling breast,
When the sad hours of absence past at length,
Hope beams auspicious through the breaking clouds.

#### PHOCYAS.

My friendship warns to shun the rocks, on which Thy fortunes may be wreck'd.

#### LEANDER.

My dear Monimia!

How wilt thou meet the glances of thy lover?
With pity beaming soft from the humid eyes,
And speaking gentle comfort to my soul?
Or with the careless air of cold contempt,
Or anger's haughty tone, and bended brow?

PHOCYAS.

Lose not in idle rhapsodies the moments Which never will return.

# LEANDER.

Since first we parted,

Has once affection wak'd a thought of me,
And taught that lovely breast to heave a sigh?

PHOCYAS.

Behold, Cleone hither bends her steps,

Leander, be compos'd, or lose for ever

The fruit of all thy toils, thy cares, thy dangers!

# SCENE II.

CLEONE, PHOCYAS; LEANDER WHO STANDS APART
MUFFLING HIS FACE WITH HIS MANTLE.

#### CLEONE.

Strangers, declare the purpose of your coming,
For so the queen commands. These still retreats
Unbidden, who presumes to tread may rue
In punishment his rashness.

# PHOCYAS.

Gracious lady,

Behold the royal signet. By command From Mithridates hither are we come To bear his greeting to the queen.

#### CLEONE.

If so,

I bid you welcome, and the queen with joy
Will listen to your message. But, kind stranger,
Your accent speaks a Grecian, though your garb
Be foreign. I was born in Ephesus,
And follow'd here the fortunes of Monimia.

But not the splendour of this royal court,

Nor all its costly luxury can win

My love from the dear dwellings of my youth.

PHOCYAS.

Thou hast judg'd aright. My parents dwelt at Rhodes;
But thrown by shipwreck on the Colchian strand,
I serve the Pontic king. Some warlike feats
By him observ'd, and prais'd beyond desert,
Have plac'd me near his person.

CLEONE.

Gentle youth,

I prithee say, (forgive a woman's weakness)
When first beneath the banners of the king,
Thou wast enroll'd?

PHOCYAS.

'Tis now some two years since.

'Tis not so long upon the march from Pergamus,
Our escort was surpris'd. A band of Greeks
Led by a gallant Mitylenian captain,
Leander was his name, then rescu'd us.

[Leander listens with emotion.

PHOCYAS.

I knew Leander well, and in that action

I serv'd beneath his orders.

CLEONE.

Tell me, stranger,

If yet he lives.

PHOCYAS.

Some few days afterwards

He left the camp, nor have I learn'd his fortunes.

But if thy soul be anxious for Leander,

This youth, his friend, perhaps may give thee tidings;

Though question'd oft by me, he still maintains

Profoundest silence, or replies in terms

Dark and ambiguous.

CLEONE.

Is he Grecian too?

PHOCYAS.

He is not, lady. Persia gave him birth;
His name Arbaces. In his early youth
(On what occasion nought imports), he dwelt
At Mitylene, and with Leander join'd
A league of mutual friendship.

CLEONE.

Good Arbaces,

If aught thou knowest of Leander's fortunes,

I pray thee speak. I long in vain have sought him,

Commission'd by the queen, who would reward His worthy service.

LEANDER.

Those who most are wretched,

Not from the grace of princes court relief,
But from the mournful silence of oblivion.
Leander drags a miserable life,
Of friends, of country, and of fame bereft,
Yet one dear hope still beams upon his soul.

CLEONE.

Prais'd be the gods, he lives! But tell me, stranger, Where is his dwelling?

LEANDER.

Give me pardon, lady.

The time demands concealment. The just gods
At whose Almighty bidding mortals live,
Or sink in woe and death, have not declar'd
Their awful purpose.

CLEONE.

This mysterious language—But lo! the queen appears.

## SCENE III.

CLEONE, LEANDER, PHOCYAS, MONIMIA, ATTENDED.

CLEONE.

My gracious mistress,

These strangers bear the signet of the king, Commission'd to declare his awful will.

MONIMIA.

With humble mind, and dutiful obedience,
I wait his dread commands. Retire, my virgins,
Cleone shall alone attend my person.
Now speak thy message.

#### PHOCYAS.

Most illustrious princess,

Partner and ornament of that bright throne,
From which the great and glorious Mithridates
Distributes like a god the fates of nations!
Thus by my mouth my royal master speaks,
To her whom most his soul delights to honour.
Twelve Persian virgins skill'd with nimble feet,
To trace the mazes of the various dance
He gives to swell thy pleasures, and at eve
Reposing from the toils of state, his purpose
Is in these odorous shades, with fair Monimia,

To share the banquet, and in mirth and sports

Awhile forget the painful toils of war.

### MONIMIA.

Poor, and unworthy of so great a king,
Are the slight pleasures which these shades afford,
And more unworthy is his humble slave,
Who shrinks affrighted from the blaze of grandeur,
And trembling stands in his majestic presence.
I wait upon his will. So tell him, stranger,
Thy tongue, well practis'd in the phrase of courts,
May grace my answer. Gentle youth, receive
This jewel, as an earnest of my favour.

#### CLEONE.

My gracious mistress, from these courteous strangers,
A Grecian this, and this whose early youth
Was pass'd in Mitylene, I sought to learn
Some tidings of that brave and gallant chief,
Whose service thou would'st recompence.

#### MONIMIA.

Cleone,

If yet he live, bid them declare his fortune.

#### PHOCYAS.

Princess, Leander lives, but secret grief
Prays on his soul, and drives him from mankind.

Nor but this youth, his friend, does any know The place of his retreat.

CLEONE.

I question'd him,

But still with dark mysterious phrase, and terms Ambiguous, he my curious search eluded.

MONIMIA.

He seems to shun my presence—I would fain Prove that I bear a grateful mind, and therefore Have sought to find thy friend——

PHOCYAS.

Approach, Arbaces,

The queen requires thy answer.

[Leander, who has been observing the queen, now comes forward and speaks.

On my knees

First let me worship those celestial beauties, For which the gods might leave their blest abodes.

MONIMIA.

That voice, Cleone! Oh, my friend, support me!

A sudden trembling seizes all my frame——

Leander!

LEANDER.

Yes, it is Leander, 'tis

The wretch by fortune, and by love pursu'd.

Oh frown not, princess! No presumptuous hope
Allures him, 'tis to die he comes.

MONIMIA.

What frenzy

Conducts thee hither! Speak, I charge thee, tell me What is thy purpose?

LEANDER.

Wilt thou hear me then?

No, fly! begone! Or dost thou mean to draw Ruin and shame upon thyself and me?

LEANDER.

Ruin on thee? Oh Venus! witness for me,
Never did mother, to redeem her child,
The last remaining fruit of all her pangs,
Bare her fond bosom to the murd'rous sword
With half th' affection, half the zeal of love,
With which I burn for thee. For thee, my life
Gladly I'd sacrifice—a worthless gift—
Oft have I risk'd it in pursuit of glory,
For thee that glory, dearer far than life,
I cast away——

#### MONIMIA.

Forbear, presumptuous youth, To move my just resentment.

LEANDER.

Oh, Monimia,

'Tis not presumption, but despair impels me! I never dar'd to hope—I know thou art
A princess, guarded by the pride of greatness,
Not less than by the coyness of thy sex.
I know thou art the wife of Mithridates—
The jealous, fierce, relentless Mithridates.
I am come here to die. I do not seek it,
For death will rob me of the dear delight
To gaze upon thy beauty; but my fate,
My passion, or my madness, drives me on.

#### MONIMIA.

I pray thee, good Leander, leave the place. Some prying eye may look upon thy transports.

I have grief enough already. Gentle youth,

Thou know'st the king's inexorable spirit,

Tempt not destruction.

LEANDER.

Is Leander's safety

Dear to Monimia then? If I must perish,
Will it add sorrow to that gentle bosom?
Oh, then, for ever let me live! Or rather
This instant cease to breathe, for I have dream'd
Of bliss, surpassing all my fondest hopes,
And I may wake to tenfold misery!

MONIMIA.

A thousand dangers here surround us. Go, I charge thee, I entreat. Let it suffice I pity thee. But what, alas, am I?

A wretched slave. In humble liberty I had not blush'd to own it. Now, alas, That pity is a crime! Farewell.

LEANDER.

For ever

Must we then part? For ever?

MONIMIA.

Strong necessity

Controls the gods. That I have wish'd to see thee,
My tears have oft borne witness. But thy presence,
And thus disguis'd, fills all my soul with terror.
We must not meet again.

LEANDER.

Yet hear, Monimia,

The Roman deputies to day have audience.

The king, whose hatred of that warlike people, Is, by the fair occasion their dissensions

Present, inflam'd, and confident of vengeance,
Will spurn at their demands, and with defiance
Dismiss them. The proconsul, this foreseen,
Has for assault prepar'd. To martial discipline
Unus'd, the feeble oriental nations
Ill second their ambitious prince. The Greeks,
Forc'd to his services will revolt, when once
The legions shall present their eagles near.

Monimia may again be free; again

Revisit Greece——

#### CLEONE.

Break off. Behold where yonder, Among the shadowing trees, some prying eye Observes your conference. 'Tis sure Suræna.

MONIMIA.

Retire, retire, Leander. West from hence,

The garden's utmost verge, there is a grove,
Where the pomegranate and the orange mix
Their glowing fruitage with the flowery myrtle.
There, when the shades of night descend, and hence
The king departs, Cleone shall expect thee.

[They go out severally

# SCENE IV. THE CAMP.

MITHRIDATES SEATED ON HIS THRONE, WITH A NUMEROUS ATTENDANCE, GIVES AUDIENCE TO THE ROMAN AMBASSADORS.

#### MITHRIDATES.

I know not, Roman, if the righteous gods,
Who shake with civil broils your proud republic,
Have in your senate breath'd a spirit more just,
And suited to your fortunes; or if yet
With arrogant pretension, and ambition
Grasping at boundless sway, you madly aim
To dictate laws to fruitful Asia's lord,
And wrest this sceptre from us, which the powers
Who reign above, committed to our hands.
But whatsoe'er thy message, speak it freely.

## ROMAN.

I come not, king, to plead before thy throne
The Roman people's, and the senate's cause,
Or justify their actions, but to speak
Their bidding. Yet, methinks, it ill becomes
The Pontic monarch, who extends his yoke
Over so many nations, and still meditates
New schemes of conquest, to arraign ambition:

Him, who invades our provinces, and tampers
With a proscribed rebel 'gainst his sovereign,
To tax with arrogance the senate's justice,
Which checks aspiring kings when, puff'd with pride,
They trample sacred right.

# MITHRIDATES.

If thou hast aught,
Commission'd from the senate, to deliver
Which fits a king to hear, briefly declare it.
If not, depart our presence and our kingdom.
We know the licence of a Roman's tongue,
And pardon thy rude freedom.

#### ROMAN.

I disdain

To veil the sentiment which truth avows.

Thy pardon comes unask'd. I nor invite

Thy wrath, nor fear it. Thus the senate speaks.

Withdraw thy troops from Greece. Restore to freedom

The cities of Ionia, and molest not

Th' allies of Rome: the senate, this perform'd,

Hails thee th' ally and friend of the republic,

And pardons thy attempt to league with Sylla.

#### MITHRIDATES.

Well hast thou spoken, Roman. Hence, report

Our prompt obedience to your general's order.

But first survey our camp: how many myriads,

Warlike, and sheath'd in not unpractis'd arms

Wait on our state. Then say, we mean to bear

Our homage to the senate's majesty,

And lowly bending to the conscript fathers,

Sue for protection in the capitol.

Give them safe conduct. Let them view the camp,

If such their will. If not, dismiss them freely.

But e'er the westering sun has lengthen'd twice

The mountain's shadow, let them pass our frontier.

If more they linger, their presumptuous rashness

Meets not our pardon.

[Turns to the Romans.

You have heard our pleasure.

Our purpose not to be remov'd. Farewell.

# SCENE V. THE ROMAN ENVOYS.

FIRST ROMAN.

His force we know, his menaces despise.
Yet, by the might of capitolian Jove,
The dauntless spirit of this proud Barbarian
May claim a Roman's praise; and, did he lead
An host of freemen to the field of war,

Not drive an herd of slaves, he were a foe That might contend against the fate of Rome, And lift the sceptre o'er the subject world.

### SECOND ROMAN.

May Rome for ever find such foes! His pride,
The iron yoke which galls his provinces;
His shameless usurpation, which o'erleaps
With fierce disdain all limits, grasping still
What tempts his wild ambition, gives our arms
The plea of justice; and his former conquests,
His courage, and his fame, with nobler palms
Shall grace our victory. Servilius, tell me,
The mercenary Greeks, have they been sounded?

#### FIRST ROMAN.

They have, and fortune favours our designs.

Whether disdainful of the tyrant's yoke,

And freely born, they seek to league with freemen,
Rather than prop despotic sway, or lightly
(Such is the fickle temper of their nation)
Indulging change I know not, but their leaders
Have mark'd the weakest quarter of the camp,
And at a signal giv'n will rise in arms
To second our attack. Their faith to us,
Their hostages secure.

# SECOND ROMAN.

Proceed we then

To meet our army, and to urge their march,
Which favouring night shall cover. With the dawn
Our sounding trumpets shall proclaim th' assault,
Which seals our triumph, and the fate of Pontus.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

# ACT III. SCENE I.

MITHRIDATES ALONE.

Suræna's faith I doubt not-Wherefore then Does my vex'd soul still labour with suspicion? The thirst of glory, and the schemes of conquest, No more possess me-Rome displays her eagles Within our limits, and my torpid breast Is fir'd with no resentment !- Shameful weakness ! Shall then a worthless woman shake my purpose, And sully all my glory?—Yet but late She fill'd my vacant hours, an useful toy Without regret thrown by, when weighty cares Of fame or empire claim'd me.-Why not now? Is she not innocent? Suræna says so. But lovers' arts may foil the subtlest statesman. There is no proof. Yet still perplexing doubt Weighs on my heart, and poisons all enjoyment. I will not bear this torment. If I speak, Leander dies.-Leander! Ha, and thus Proclaim my jealous rage, and tell mankind My slave had pow'r to torture me.—How then ?— Must I endure this ?—No—'twere nobler far

To throw this poison from me, certain, thus,
To end my doubts, perhaps, to glut my vengeance.
What then remains? — Why, let Monimia die?
See what the loss amounts to—But a woman—
Are there not myriads fair? And will not Asia,
From all her countless provinces and cities,
Send forth her lovely dames, ambitious all
To share our bed?—A newer joy shall chase
The image of the past.—Suræna!

# SCENE II.

SURÆNA ENTERS.

SURÆNA.

May the gods

Preserve the king! Thy slave attends thy orders.

. MITHRIDATES.

Approach, Suræna. Is the queen prepar'd To greet our coming?

SURÆNA.

Mighty prince, the queen,

Obedient to thy dread commands, expects
With fond impatience her imperial lord.
The bower is dressed, and incense breathing round
Scents the soft air: the ready minstrels stand,

Ranged with a troop of lovely dames, prepared To greet with warbled song thy raptur'd sense, Or tread the varied mazes of the dance.

### MITHRIDATES.

Does this effeminate dalliance suit the name
Of Mithridates, at whose awful sound,
Greece, through her numerous states, has shook, and
Rome,

Victorious Rome, check'd in her proud career, Has paus'd on conquest? Freely speak, Suræna, Thy breast is faithful, and thy words are wise.

## SURÆNA.

Who, mighty sovereign, shall presume to scan Thy actions? Not the foe, who feels thy power To curb or punish. Not thy faithful people Who worship at thy throne, and kiss the ground Thy footsteps have made sacred.

#### MITHRIDATES.

What is this

But the vain incense which the slavish mind Heaps, undistinguishing, where'er the diadem Beams forth its radiance? Persia's satraps thus Sooth'd, with pernicious flattery, the mind Of Xerxes, or Darius, while the Greek, Or Macedonian, strong in his own virtue, Their silken pomp deriding, shook their throne With hardy daring, and victorious arms.

## SURÆNA.

Yet even he, the mighty conqueror,
Who after Grecian liberty subdu'd,
Darius' throne o'erturn'd, and from Euphrates
To Egypt's fertile stream his power ador'd,
Courted new dangers, and with ceaseless toil
Pierc'd to remotest India's eastern shore,
Wash'd by the mighty Erythrean wave,
Relax'd his soul amid the gay delights
Of the rich banquet and the flowing bowl,
Or in the secret bower, in dalliance soft,
Gaz'd on the beauties of some favourite fair,
Who bound his warlike arms with flowery chains.

# MITHRIDATES.

And great Alcides to a distaff turn'd
His pond'rous mace, and sunk a woman's slave.
Not so thy master. To my grasp the gods
Have given a sceptre not to be maintain'd
By soft enjoyments and luxurious ease,
But care, and toil, and war. They plac'd me here
To stem the torrent of the Roman pride.

Full in my view they held a noble prize,
And bade me bravely win it by my sword.
Nor shall the petty passions which invade
The breasts of vulgar kings find entrance here.
Hear then our orders. Let Monimia die.

SURÆNA.

Amazement!

## MITHRIDATES.

Hence. But offer to her choice
The means. Whether it be the hemlock's juice
That locks in fatal cold the stiff'ning limbs,
Forbidding pain: or, if she nobler deem,
Upon the warlike sword to fall. Our will
Must be perform'd. So to thy care we leave it,
If her weak sex shrink from the task impos'd,
Tis thine to execute what we have spoken,
Or thine own life is forfeit.

#### SURÆNA.

Awful prince!
Behold me prostrate at thy feet. My life
Is thine. Thy slave entreats thee not to spare
His worthless being. Let ev'n Monimia perish
If such thy will, and if thy bliss demand it.
But oh have pity, spare, oh spare thyself!

Recall the fatal mandate ere repentance
Shall wring thy tortur'd breast with fruitless pangs.

#### MITHRIDATES.

Suræna, favour'd though thou art, we brook not

A servant who withstands our will. Suffice it

Thou hast been heard, nor farther tempt our anger.

#### SURÆNA.

To me 'tis dreadful as the wrath of Jove.
Yet Jove himself, the master of the gods,
Is mov'd by prayer. The humble suppliant
Unblam'd may touch his altar. But on me
Let fall thy fury. Only for thy service
My life was lent me. I shall perish well
If, by my death, I may divert thy purpose.

MITHRIDATES.

No more.

#### SURÆNA.

O sire, with patience hear thy slave.

A transient mist may cloud a godlike mind,

The first of mortals still has human feelings.

Pardon my zeal. Let not a jealous transport

In one too fatal moment cut thee off

For ever, from the good thou most hast valued;

The best reward of all thy glorious toils;

The sweetest soother of thy royal cares.

Have I not spoke the word?

SURÆNA.

Oh yet recall it,

While yet thou may'st, ere yet th' effect is past! Great as thou art, thou canst not with new life Inform the senseless corse. That beauteous form, Once cold in death, shall never charm thee more. And when suspicion's hasty clouds disperse, Think what remorse awaits thee, when thine eyes In vain require Monimia, and the monitor Within shall tell thee thou hast cast away A jewel, brighter and more pure than all

#### MITHRIDATES.

I gave thee license freely to disclose
Thy counsel. Thou hast spoken, and thy zeal
Long known and try'd secures thy pardon. But
No more presume to urge me. That my soul
Entangled in the silken chains of beauty,
And rack'd with idle jealousies of love,
Infirm of purpose, for a moment stood
Suspended, and forgot the task of empire,

Thy wide extended empire yet can boast.

I own indignant, and the galling thought Gives nerve to my resolve. Without a pang I throw the bauble from me.

#### SURÆNA:

What the gods

Inspire, may they propitious turn to good!

Proud Rome shall feel me vigorous in design,
And bold and prompt to execute. How now?
Whence this intrusion? Speak thine errand, soldier.

# SCENE III.

A MESSENGER ENTERS.

### MESSENGER.

Dread sovereign, live for ever. Even now
Our scouts proclaim the foe has rais'd his camp,
And measures back his march, alarm'd, 'tis said,
By certain notice of th' approach of Sylla.

# MITHRIDATES.

How are these tidings known? Be brief and sudden.

MESSENGER.

The peasants from the neighbouring villages
Report the march. They seiz'd some straggling soldiers,
And hither brought them. From the Roman camp

Two have sought refuge here, and one his port Proclaims of no inferior rank. The same we learn'd From them, and what th' occasion of retreat.

### MITHRIDATES.

Bring them before us. We shall question them:

If this report be true, th' immortal gods

Decree to us renown and victory.

The proud republic totters to its base,

And her best blood in civil contest shed

Will fall an easy prey. Is not their march

Observed?

#### MESSENGER.

Pharnaces, royal lord, sent forth
His bands of swiftest horsemen to observe
Their movements, and with frequent charge disturb
Their troops retiring.

#### MITHRIDATES.

Let the chiefs be warn'd Throughout our camp to hold their bands prepar'd.

Occasion of advantage may arise;

Nor shall we let it pass.

#### SURÆNA.

Ev'n now, methinks, I hear a distant tumult, and the call

To arms, and lo! a breathless messenger, Bearing no doubt momentous tidings, comes.

# SCENE IV.

ENTER ANOTHER MESSENGER.

#### MESSENGER.

The horse, great king, late by Pharnaces sent
T' explore the foe, repuls'd, confus'dly fly
To reach the camp, and from the foremost stations
Bear down, with equal terror seiz'd, the guards,
Companions of their flight. The Parthian horse,
And Colchian infantry, have mov'd already
To their support.

#### MITHRIDATES.

The foe's retreat was then
A stratagem, meant to deceive our vigilance,
And bodes sharp conflict near. But they shall find
Our spears are keen and ready. Hence, command
To lift the sign of battle. Sound the trumpets,
The troops stand to their arms. Before the camp
Draw out the nations. Soon th' insulting foe
Shall check his rash pursuit, and in his turn
Shall learn to fear. Suræna, we shall need
Thy counsel. What we gave thee late in charge

May wait a fitter time. Meanwhile be careful
To guard the palace with a chosen band,
And leaders of approved faith and valour,
Our native subjects. Through the camp proceed,
Array the troops, collect from all the scouts
The posture of the foe. In my pavilion,
Where now the captive Romans wait our presence,
We shall expect thee.

# SCENE V.

SURÆNA ALONE.

Oh, exalted monarch,

Worthy of empire! In the midst of danger
Unmov'd, and to thy generous purpose firm:
Thy generous purpose to resist a proud
Aspiring people, who confess no law
But their own will and power, and treat mankind
Like bondsmen born to serve them. Mithridates,
In his own valour confident, asserts
His native sceptre. Those victorious bands,
By whom proud Carthage fell; to whom the states
Of Greece submit, and all the monarchies
Sprung from the dreaded Macedonian name,
Stand check'd by his brave spirit, which still rises

Great from defeat, and vigorous from misfortunes. Why are these glories clouded by his stern Relentless temper, which beholds unmov'd All tears, all sorrow, all calamities, Inflicted by his will, and bathes in blood, The blood which should be dearest to his soul, Cruel ev'n to himself! Is such the law of man's imperfect nature, And of such hard impenetrable substance Must those be form'd, whom the just gods design To stem the tide, and turn the fates of nations? Ah poor Monimia! Yet a little respite The pitying powers have granted; but too well I know thy rugged lord, and death's dark shade Is closing fast around thee!  $\Gamma Exit.$ 

# SCENE VI.

THE ORANGE GROVE.

## LEANDER ALONE.

Oh torture of suspense! How many doubts,

How many fears distract my soul! Perhaps

Cleone comes not. The departed sun

Reposes in the west, and twilight sheds

Her last pale glimmerings through the twisted boughs;

And yet no anger from Monimia's eyes
Bad me despair. I spoke of Roman victory,
And liberty to her. She heard with patience.
Did she not smile upon me? Did she not
Bid me with night's approach expect Cleone
In this sequester'd grove? Some sudden mischief
Too surely has befall'n her. I remember,
And tremble but to think of it, Cleone
Broke off our conference, and bade beware
Observing eyes. Oh, if the jealous tyrant—
Madness is in that thought—Perhaps for me,
Monimia dies this moment! Soft, I hear
The tread of gentle feet, a rustling sound
Steals through the shade. 'Tis she, it is Cleone.

CLEONE ENTERS AND SPEAKS.

Leander!

## LEANDER,

Oh most welcome! Gentle hope
Shines forth at thy approach. Oh say, Cleone,
Art thou the harbinger of joy and rapture,
Breathing sweet words of comfort to my ear?
Or more disastrous than the raven's note,
Dost thou extinguish that dear hope, Monimia
With patience list'ning to my fond complaint,

Had kindled? Oh, if such thine errand, spare The fatal tale, and leave me to despair!

CLEONE.

What frenzy fires thy brain? Be more compos'd.

Collect thy soul. The time demands sage counsel,

And not a madman's rage. Thou know'st I come

Commission'd by the queen. She bade me hear

What is thy purpose.

LEANDER.

Oh forgive, Cleone,
A lover's transport. If the queen indeed
Would burst the galling chains which bind her fortune
To the proud tyrant of this eastern world,
The means 'tis mine to point, and oh might she
With pity listen to my tale of love,
As sure as I shall give her liberty!

CLEONE.

And can'st thou doubt, Leander, that the captive Sighs for deliverance? Can'st thou doubt a Grecian, Freeborn, and by each gentle muse adorn'd, Loathing rejects a rude barbarian lord? But who shall wrestle with th' unbending fates? What force subdue his power? What art elude His vigilance? Ev'n here with trembling step

I came, and trembling here converse with thee, Lest spies observe us, and destruction seize Monimia, thee Leander, and myself.

### LEANDER.

There is no cause for fear. Our plans are form'd With such precaution, with such prudent foresight, Success is most assur'd. The morning's dawn Shall see a Grecian band of chosen warriors, Approv'd for faith and courage, seize the avenues That to the palace lead. Without a blow Will they o'erpower the guard of silken slaves Who watch Monimia. Well to us is known Each secret path. Let but Monimia then Confide her person to our faithful escort, Soon shall she reach the Roman camp in safety.

#### CLEONE.

I dare not promise thee, advent'rous youth,
The queen will aid thy purpose. True, she sighs
For freedom, and with ceaseless tears deplores
That fatal hour, when peaceful solitude
Was ill exchang'd for the vain pomp of greatness.
But duty, and the pride of conscious virtue,
Maintain a painful conflict in her breast
Against her fond desires. Death she implores,

Death only, the sure refuge of th' unhappy.

LEANDER.

Alas, though bleeding love may sue in vain, Shall the fair hope to visit once again Her kindred, friends, and country; once again Upon the altar of the sacred powers That guard her lov'd paternal house, to burn Incense, and breathe to them the grateful vow; Shall this fair hope yield to the rude constraint Which binds her to a fierce and foreign lord? And will she call it duty, far from Greece, To other gods polluted praise to pour, And count it virtuous pride to swell the train And serve the pleasures of her country's foe? Ah no, Cleone! In her doubting breast Be thine to waken thoughts more just. With her's Thy fate is twin'd. Fair freedom courts you both. Blest be your future days, and though Leander Must never hope return of gentle love To sooth his anguish, and to bid him live, Oh save thyself, Cleone, save Monimia!

Ah, good Leander, could Cleone's prayers

Avail, thy wish would not be breath'd in vain!

CLEONE.

To me most joyful is this fair occasion: Believe I shall employ each powerful art Of soft persuasion, tears, and strong entreaty, To move Monimia. And I much misdeem If, in her gentle bosom, no soft voice Of rising love shall plead Leander's cause. To favouring Venus, youth, thy offerings bear, And she shall speed thee. Now farewell, Leander.

LEANDER.

To-morrow's dawn or crowns my love, or death For ever wraps me in oblivion's shade!

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

# ACT IV. SCENE I.

MITHRANES AND PHARNEUCUS, TWO OFFICERS BE-LONGING TO THE ARMY OF MITHRIDATES.

## MITHTRANES.

'Twas a rude conflict. Little did we dream When with elated hearts we urg'd our steeds On the retiring legions, such reception Awaited us.

## PHARNEUCUS.

I never thought our troops,
Once check'd, would ev'n for a few minutes space
Withstand the fierce assault. Yet fought they stoutly
Nor, till the foremost fell, gave ground. At length,
Indeed, their flight was most precipitate.
Rout and confusion urg'd them o'er the plain,
While slaughter hung upon their rear.

#### MITHRANES.

Pharneucus,

The gods still war against us. Fight, or fly, We perish still, and victory displays
Unfailing splendors on the Roman crests.
Unskill'd in arts of war, we are brave in vain,

And yet the morning's dawn again shall see
Our feeble bands driv'n to th' unequal conflict,
And slaughter'd by th' invulnerable foe
By thousands, and ten thousands, till his arm
Wearied, no longer lift the sword, or night
Cover the trembling reliques of our host.

# PHARNEUCUS.

Alas, Mithranes, our relentless prince, Who freely pours his blood, when glory calls, Beholds unmov'd his wretched people die!

## MITHRANES.

Justice, Pharneucus, owns him great and valiant,
Jealous of honour, of disgrace impatient.

Where'er he moves in fight, his dauntless soul
Flames from his eyes, and fills his glowing followers
With vigour not their own. A hardy warrior
Must he be deem'd, who dares his arm encounter.

And then so well he acts the general's part,
That oft against the fate of Rome herself
He half preyails, and holds the battle doubtful.

#### PHARNEUCUS.

'Tis true, and were he politic as valiant,
Or Rome would give us pause, till just degrees
Had train'd our youth to arms, with such a leader

We yet might hope to win the wreath of honour. But see, Suræna.

# SCENE II.

SURÆNA ENTERS.

SURÆNA.

Hail, my warlike friends;
Auspicious be th' approaching dawn of day,
And favouring gods protect you in the conflict!
But wherefore do ye linger here? You know
Our rigid monarch brooks not disobedience.
Ev'n now the army moves. Woe to the chief
Who lags behind, and whose unready troops
Bespeak him negligent, or cold in service.

### MITHRANES.

The bands we lead are well prepar'd, nor will The signal find us absent from our stations.

#### SURÆNA.

My care shall to the king report your merits.

Now to your posts with speed. Those trumpets tell

The near approach of mighty Mithridates.

And as the latest scouts report the foe

Retiring, doubt not he will urge your march.

# SCENE III.

SURÆNA ALONE.

Oh thou, the guardian of this eastern world, Who soon shall lift above you shadowy hill Thy glorious beams; whose power beneficent Performs the bidding of th' almighty word, And from the bosom of the teeming earth Calls forth the food of man: clothes the rich vale With waving harvests, and with glowing fruits Adorns the bending hills! The starry train Thou guidest. Thee the varying year obeys. To certain periods thou the course of time Confinest. All events succeed in earth And heav'n, as thou appointest. Oh, on us Shine, as thou risest, with auspicious aspect, Great Lord of light and glory! Be the blood Of thy true servants not pour'd forth in vain! Oh give us victory, nor let the sword Of Rome prevail against us!

# SCENE IV.

TRUMPETS. ENTER MITHRIDATES ATTENDED.

MITHRIDATES, TO HIS ATTENDANTS.

Retire. Suræna here attends our orders. Let none presume unbidden to approach us.

SURÆNA.

Health and long life, with victory and honour, Still may high heav'n bestow on Mithridates!

MITHRIDATES,

'Tis now confirm'd, Suræna, that the Romans Continue their retreat, and, notwithstanding Their late successful onset on our vanguard, Ev'n with disorder'd haste. They shall not quit Our frontier unchastised.

STIR ZENA.

May glorious Mithra,

And all the starry host, fight on thy side!

My orders have been issu'd through the camp.

Are all the troops prepar'd? Does any spark

Of honour or of shame inform their breasts;

Or will they shrink, in presence of their sovereign,

Perfore a flying foe?

### SURÆNA.

An hundred nations

Beneath thy banner march, and emulation Shall fire them all to win their monarch's praise,

### MITHRIDATES.

The dastard wretch, who flies in this day's trial,

Flies to his death, and ignominious torture

Shall rend his frame, and teach his pale companions

There is more terror in this frowning brow

Than all the armed files of hostile Romans.

Now to my purpose. When I last dismiss'd thee,

I bade suspend Monimia's death.

# SURÆNA.

Just heav'n,

Heav'n, that, propitious still, thy happiness Designs, inspired the thought of mercy!

#### MITHRIDATES.

Lightly,

By thine own feeble and irresolute mind,
Thou scan'st my counsels. No: my happiness
Hangs not upon a dimpled cheek, nor twines
In the soft ringlets of a woman's hair.
My word is fate: determin'd once my purpose,
Not heav'n's own thunder can unfix my soul.

Be thou the bearer of our dread commands,
And speak the mercy we intend. Death wears
A thousand forms, and by the manly mind
All are despis'd alike. But feeble woman
In this, or that, a thousand fancied terrors
Beholds, and vainly dreams he may be won
To steal the parting breath without a pang.
Be her's then to decide upon the means,
But she must die; die, ere the sun again
Resign to night the empire of the skies.

### SURÆNA.

Trembling, and prostrate at thy feet I fall,
Dread sovereign! Well I know, if fix'd thy purpose,
No pray'rs can move thee, and thy power is boundless.

### MITHRIDATES.

Rise!

#### SURÆNA.

Let not anger doom to swift destruction

The zeal that burns to serve thee. Clouds of doubt

That rose before thee, and suspicion, sprung,

Not from the light behaviour of the queen,

But the presumptuous rashness of Leander,

First gave this purpose birth. Oh sire, suspend it,

Till judgment more mature, and facts explored Confirm, or cancel it! The queen, dread sire, I pledge my life is guiltless.

### MITHRIDATES.

Be it so.

Let it suffice that, to our bed advanc'd,
And partner of our state, her glorious lot
Has been exalted far above her sex.
It suits no longer with our great designs
That station should be her's. The queen of Pontus
Can never sink into a slave, and therefore
Our counsels, which no more permit to share
Our throne, decree her death.

SURÆNA.

My gracious lord-

### MITHRIDATES.

Slave, thou presum'st too far on our indulgence:
Has then our wrath no terrors? Who disputes
Our sovereign will? and, charg'd with our commands,
Dares pause upon obedience?

SURÆNA. (aside.)

'Tis too plain.

I dare no farther. Thou art lost, Monimia!

Thy slave beholds thee as a god on earth,
Whate'er thou will'st is just, and to obey thee,
Glory and happiness! The king comes forth.

[Exit Mithridates, trumpets sounding, Suræna follows.

# SCENE V. MONIMIA'S CHAMBER.

MONIMIA ALONE.

Cleone comes not. Let me pause awhile. What have I done? Oh wherefore has my weakness Yielded that she should meet this Grecian youth? 'Twas rash, 'twas dangerous. Alas! 'twas criminal. Oh ye soft airs that fann'd my virgin bosom; Soft airs of calm delight, and gentle peace! Not you I now recall, dear as you were, Though late to think of you was all my comfort. Return, return, ye hours of pensive grief, Of solitary tears, and sad complainings! Oh save me from the pangs of self reproach! The haughty Mithridates is my lord. Rough as he is, remorseless, stern, and cruel, To him I swore, Connubial Juno heard me. And Nemesis still bears her iron scourge. While all the furies wait upon her nod,

To punish perjuries. And then my fame!

Dear to a woman's heart is spotless honour;

'Tis her best wealth, of which but her own folly,

Not all the force of tyrant man can rob her.

It sooths the pangs of grief, the breast which throbs

With anxious fear, and lifts the conscious soul

Above despair. I will not throw it from me.

Our feeble sex is fram'd too soft and tender,

To brave, and to repel th' assaults of danger:

But we can suffer. That sad praise is ours.

My kind and faithful friend!

# SCENE VI.

ENTER CLEONE.

CLEONE.

My royal mistress!

MONIMIA.

Oh my Cleone, has thou seen Leander?

CLEONE.

But now we parted at the orange grove.

And is he gone?

CLEONE.

But soon to turn again.

Such golden hope is open'd to my view, My breast beats high with rapture.

MONIMIA:

I repent me

That thou hast seen him. Talk of him no more:

Not talk of him, the harbinger of freedom!

Not talk of him, for whom so late Monimia

Pour'd streams of tears! Him, whom she sought, regardless

Of royal sovereign state and greatness, with such anxious And fond solicitude!

### MONIMIA.

Alas, Cleone, shall my friend upbraid
The tender frailty of my woman's heart?
But it is past. I feel, and love my duty.
I will not violate my nuptial vows;
I will not join in league against my husband,
And plot with strangers to destroy the man
I am most bound to honour.

CLEONE.

Oh Monimia,

Is Greece no longer dear? Thy country's gods, And thy paternal mansion, peace and liberty;

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Are they all slighted for this proud barbarian?

Are they not dear? Oh dearer far than life!

To-morrow's dawn restores them to thy wishes;

To-morrow's dawn makes thee once more a Grecian;

Wakes thee to liberty, and peace, and joy.

MONIMIA.

Talk not of joy and peace, for they are exiled For ever from my breast.

CLEONE.

When all the guards, The jealous tyrant's slaves, that watch thy steps, Are slaughter'd, captive, flying: when Leander Proclaims thee free—

# MONIMIA.

Ev'n then, ev'n then, Cleone,
Though my heart bleed, and though my weeping eyes
See hopeless misery, and death before me,
I will not be a false disloyal wife;
I will not stain my honourable name.
Fly thou, Cleone, the good gods protect thee!
May they show'r all their blessings on thy head!
Thy gentle arts have often sooth'd my woes.

Monimia dares to suffer, dares to die, But she will ne'er be guilty.

CLEONE.

Think more justly:

It is not guilt to break a tyrant's chains.

The gods with pity look on human misery.

From them proceeds deliverance. When th' occasion

Not sought, but offer'd, speaks their gracious providence,

To spurn the boon were impious.

MONIMIA.

No, Cleone,

I reverence the gods. Before the altars

My faith was plighted. Will their vengeance sleep

If I am perjur'd? What shall curb the licence

Of human crimes, if righteous heaven is call'd

To witness falsehood?

AN ATTENDANT.

From the king, Suræna

Desires admittance.

MONIMIA.

Instant give him entrance.

# SCENE VII.

### ENTER SURÆNA.

MONIMIA.

What does our gracious lord command his handmaid?

Oh queen, how shall I speak my dreadful message!

What dost thou say? Has aught of ill befall'n The royal Mithridates?

SURÆNA.

Mithridates

Leads on his forces with propitious omens.

The legions still retreat, and fortune smiles
Upon his brightest hopes.

MONIMIA.

These are glad tidings,

And welcome to my soul. The gods be prais'd!

SURÆNA.

Oh be the gods obtested, if my life
Might have appeas'd his anger, might have chang'd
His fatal purpose, I had gladly died.

MONIMIA.

What horrid business labours in thy bosom?

I fear, but know not why.

### SURÆNA.

Thou hast, alas,

A cause too just! Oh summon all thy fortitude!

Suræna, trust me, thou may'st spare this preface.
Affliction has been long familiar to me.
Speak boldly, for, behold, I stand prepar'd
To meet the worst.

### SURÆNA.

Forgive, unhappy queen,
Th' unwilling messenger of ill. He bids thee,
Ere night again descends, he bids thee die.
The means are to thy option left.

### CLEONE.

Oh, horror!

What have I heard! My queen! Oh bloody tyrant!

Thy message bears no terror. Tell thy master
With cheerful brow I heard, with cheerful brow
His mandate I obey. My good Suræna,
Death is the certain refuge of th' unhappy:
I often have invok'd him. Fare thee well.
I thank thy pity, but believe me, friend,

I need it not. The king has made thee bearer Of a most welcome boon. Thou may'st retire.

[Suræna is going.

Yet tell thy lord (for I have yet to learn
Whether imputed guilt, or mere caprice,
And sated passion, has procur'd my doom,)
Secure in conscious virtue, I disdain
His cruelty; and my unsullied name
Shall shine with lustre all its own, amidst
The gloomy annals of his iron reign. [Suræna goes out.
Oh hear, Jove's awful consort, scepter'd Juno!
And thou, unconquer'd Pallas! fill my breast
With fortitude unshaken. Let me meet
Death, and his terrors, with so firm an aspect,
That Greece exulting may enrol Monimia
Among the heroines of ancient times,
And future ages wonder and applaud!

My queen, my friend! What means this solemn phrase? Thou art not surely bent on death? The bonds, Misdeem'd of duty, which erewhile restrain'd thee, This stern and faithless tyrant has dissolved. Thou now can'st meet, nor fear reproaching conscience, Thy brave deliverers, thy just avengers.

CLEONE.

MONIMIA.

Ah poor Cleone, thy fond love of me Has sure obscur'd thy reason!

CLEONE.

'Tis most true.

When first Suræna spoke the bloody Mandate,

Fear, horror, grief, fill'd all my throbbing bosom.

I had forgot that the triumphant morn

Would bring Leander to Monimia's aid,

And the proud baffled tyrant rage in vain

To see his victim plac'd beyond his grasp.

MONIMIA.

Cleone, think me not so poor of spirit,

I would forego the guerdon of renown,

Which now invites me, and would basely purchase

Precarious life with foul dishonour. Nourish

Vain hopes no more, but rather let thy friendship

With generous zeal sustain my fainting soul,

If chance remembrance of my lov'd companions,

Of thee, Cleone, dearer than the rest,

Should dim my eyes with tears, and cloud the lustre

Of my last hour. I will retire awhile,

And to th' immortal powers prefer my prayer,

And offer holy incense! Nor, Persephone,
Whose shadowy kingdom I so soon must visit,
Be thy just rites forgot! Oh gently, goddess,
Receive thy suppliant. Smooth for me the path
Which leads to the still mansions of the dead:
And gentle breezes from elysian bowers
Bear my freed spirit on their balmy wings!

CLEONE.

Oh rather Fortune, Themis, every power
That guards the good, bring hither aid, and rescue!
Bear down with swift defeat the tyrant's host,
And bring triumphant Rome, with wholesome violence.
To stay the blow, and force thee to be happy!

MONIMIA.

Here, yet, once more, Cleone, when devotion
No more demands me, let me find my friend,
For the last time to press thee to my breast,
And hear thy gently soothing voice. Here too
Entreat the sisters of the Pontic king,
(My sisters let me call them, kind and gentle
They still have been to me,) with their lov'd presence
To grace my parting moments. Fair Statira
Is soft of soul, and though Roxana share

The lofty spirit of her royal race,

Her eyes have ever mildly beam'd on me.

Now fare thee well, soon shall we meet again.

CLEONE.

Soon shall we meet, alas, to part for ever!

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

# ACT V.

# SCENE I. THE PALACE.

CLEONE, AND OTHER ATTENDANTS OF MONIMIA, STA-TIRA AND ROXANA, SISTERS OF MITHRIDATES.

### CLEONE.

A mournful office now the time demands:

Pass but a few short hours, all that remains

For those who shall survive, will be to deck

Her tomb. And shall not each revolving year,

As long as this firm earth endures, as long

As one kind bosom, form'd for love and friendship,

Is found in Pontus, see Monimia's shrine

Adorn'd with garlands, and hear warbled strains

By moonlight in the consecrated shades?

But lo, the royal sisters! If on them

The doom of death were past, no keener pang

Would pierce their bosoms, than what now they feel

For poor Monimia's fate,

# SCENE II.

ENTER STATIRA AND ROXANA.

### STATIRA.

Alas, Cleone,

How shall I bear this parting? I have never
Known happiness sincere, but in the hours
Of calm retirement, when her gentle voice
Has charm'd my list'ning ear. And must I now
Behold her die? The thought is death to me.

# ROXANA.

Cleone surely did not hear aright.

More than his life my brother priz'd Monimia.

Her charms, with fame and empire, in his bosom
Held equal place, and now he bids her die!

# CLEONE.

Alas, it is too certain. Ere the night
O'ershadows this wide realm, Monimia falls
By his command. Suræna will return
To enforce obedience. But, alas, Monimia
Is bent on death, and rushes on destruction
With zeal, which will not wait returning mercy,
And with disdain rejects each prudent counsel
Which might avert the blow!

### ROXANA.

It cannot be.

Monimia's spotless life defies the venom
Of sland'rous tongues. There are not wanting flatterers,
Base, abject sycophants, who watch the birth
Of dark suspicion in the breasts of princes,
And court their favour with pernicious lies.
But here suspicion cannot rest—The king
Will soon repent the blind capricious fury
Which bids her die, whom most his soul approves.

### STATIRA.

How dreadful is his fury! Oh, Roxana!

He will repent, but only bath'd in blood.

Let but the sun go down, and his repentance

Will come too late!

### ROXANA.

Let us conceal Monimia, Report her dead, and when his heart relents, Reveal the welcome secret.

#### STATIRA.

Oh forgive me,

My dear Roxana! Dreadful is the wrath Of Mithridates! Fear benumbs my heart. Yet would I gladly die to save our sister.

CLEONE.

I must dissemble. They may aid my purpose.

In such a cause, 'tis venial sure to feign.

Could we but gain a few short minutes! Soon

Leander comes, and then, ev'n though reluctant,

Monimia may be sav'd. Just heav'n assist me! [Aside.

Perhaps some Grecian might with rich rewards

Be tempted, now, while the host moves to battle,

And tumult, and confusion reign around,

To force, or to surprize the feeble guard

Who watch the palace, or clude their vigilance,

And bear her off. Thus might the queen be sav'd,

Nor you, ye generous maids, provoke the wrath,

The fatal wrath of jealous Mithridates.

ROXANA.

To save Monimia, I would gladly do
What may consist with honour. Might her flight
Be secret, no rebellious force employ'd,
Nor any danger to my brother's armies,
Well pleas'd would I consent, nay urge her to it.

CLEONE.

There is a secret passage, known I trust To me alone, by which I oft have met A faithful youth, friend of my early years.

Still has he press'd me from these walls to fly;
But could I leave Monimia? leave my queen,
My gentle mistress? He, not soon repulsed,
Urges his suit. Ere mid-day I expect him.

ROXANA.

This bears a specious seeming.

CLEONE.

Royal maid!

With ease she may be borne from hence, and none
But me seem conscious of the deed; but, oh,
What eloquence shall win her to consent?
There is no hope, unless with strong persuasion,
And earnest prayer, yourselves essay to move her.
And see, she comes! Ah must that lovely form,
In youth's fresh bloom, breathing each kind affection,
And pure as snow new-fall'n on Caucasus,
Sink in death's icy grasp?

SCENE III.

ENTER MONIMIA.

ROXANA.

Monimia! sister!

### STATIRA.

Oh now more dear than ever to my heart!

My kind, and gentle sisters! I have wished
To see you, that my latest words might bless you,
My latest glance declare my grateful heart,
And speak my love in death. I see you do not
In this dread hour forsake me. Your affection
Enfolds me still, though Mithridates frown,
Frown ev'n to death, and throw me rudely from him,
Like a loath'd, noxious reptile!

### STATIRA.

No, Monimia,

Thou shalt not die. Before our brother's feet, Prostrate, and weeping, we will pray for mercy, And save, or perish with thee!

#### MONIMIA.

Kind Statira!

### ROXANA.

Some villain has with lies inflam'd his anger,

A little time will dissipate the cloud

Which now obscures his mind. How will he then
Bless the kind hand which has preserv'd Monimia.

Fly then, my sister, we will lend our aid,

And trust our care and love to bring thee safety.

I fear, Roxana, thou hast truly guess'd.

The pride of Mithridates will not stoop

To urge a charge against his slave, whose life

Hangs on his nod. But foul suspicion lurks

In his fierce soul, and brings this doom upon me.

And shall I stain my fame, and give fair colour

To calumny, by flying from the face

Of my accusers, ere my righteous cause

Be heard? No, my Roxana, I must die.

There is no other means to clear my honour,

And wring the cruel heart of Mithridates

With keen, though late remorse.

### ROXANA.

We can bear witness

How innocent thou art. And who shall doubt,
When ev'n the sisters of thy jealous lord
Aloud proclaim it.

# MONIMIA.

Ah, my dear Roxana,

Think how the fury of th' offended king
Will rise to madness, when he learns his victim
Is ravish'd from him. Can I bear the thought,

That you, my best belov'd, that poor Cleone, And this my gentle train of friends, involv'd In ruin for my sake, have paid the forfeit Which should have fallen on me alone?

ROXANA.

Monimia !

Oh, hear me. Not for thee alone I plead, For these, for poor Statira, for myself. By the hard law of our imperial birth, Cut off from the surrounding world, thou only, Monimia, thou hast lov'd us. In thy bosom We have pour'd forth our cares; thy faithful bosom, Which shar'd them all. It was Monimia taught us Why we should wish to live! By thee forsaken, All will to us be blank and desolate. And death, invok'd by our continual pray'rs, Will come most welcome to us. Oh, dear sister ! Live for our sakes! And do not fear, Monimia! Thy fame by us is cherish'd as our own; While we survive, opinion cannot taint it. Ev'n Mithridates will to us give ear, Believe thee innocent, and wish thee living. MONIMIA.

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Your kindness almost shakes my firm resolve.

Oh what would I not bear, dear maids, to live For you!

ROXANA.

Nor is there danger in th' attempt.

Faithful Cleone shall attend thy flight,
And thou shalt be bestow'd where none but we
Shall know to find thee. When Suræna comes
We shall report thee dead, and one of these,
Dress'd in thy garments, on the mournful bier
Extended, and a weeping train around
Will meet his eyes, excluding every doubt.
He will not dare, with a too curious eye,
Obtrude upon our privacy. This fraud
Is easy, as 'tis pious.

MONIMIA.

Press no farther.

In this distracted breast you raise a conflict

Too painful to be borne. What dreadful noise

Is that? The sound of battle?

CLEONE. (to an attendant.)

Hence with speed,

Inquire the cause.

STATIKA.

Oh let Statira join

Her tears and prayer! Live, my Monimia, live! We must be wretched without thee, Monimia. Oh change thy purpose! ere it be too late. Think what a dreadful thing it is to die! The wretch that flies before pursuing foes, Hiding his head in caves, and often wanting Wherewith to baffle hunger; he, who mourns, Without a friend, abandon'd to reproach; Yet hopes for kinder fate. But for the dead There is no hope. Death in itself is fearful, And all is dark beyond.

CLEONE.

My dearest mistress,

Relent at length! Let these fair mourners move thee! Ev'n now the time approaches. Safety, freedom, The gods present thee; do not spurn the boon!

MONIMIA.

My feeble spirit quails! I feel how strong
The love of life is clinging to my heart,
But honour, virtue, female pride forbid—

THE ATTENDANT ENTERS.

CLEONE.

Declare thy tidings.

ATTENDANT.

Horror and confusion,

Far as the eye can reach prevail. The plain
Is cover'd with the thousands, who in flight
Strive who shall reach the camp. Each moment
brings

The victors' shout more near. Dark clouds of dust
Hang o'er the rout; nor can the eye discern
If any yet stand firm, and if the banner
Of Mithridates with the crowd retire,
Or pointed on the foe maintain as yet
A doubtful conflict. But a band of horsemen
Right onward to the palace hold their course.
If friends or foes, none yet can tell.

CLEONE.

It comes,

Deliverance comes! The gods have heard our pray'r.
ROXANA.

Deliverance, say'st thou? Horror! Should the foe Here force his way, what then remains but death? I fear already all our means of flight Have been cut off.—We cannot, helpless women, Rush 'midst the crowds of fugitives.—Just gods! Shall we be captives to the haughty Romans?

A spectacle in Rome?

CLEONE.

No hope remains

For me, for poor Monimia! Lo! Suræna!

SCENE IV.

ENTER SURÆNA.

MONIMIA.

How now, Suræna! Ere th' appointed time Why art thou here? Does thy unfeeling lord Repine his mercy granted some few moments To take a last farewell of these my friends? I stand prepar'd to brave his utmost malice. Be quick, and do thy office.

SURÆNA.

Royal dame!

And you, imperial maids, sprung from the same Proud stem with Mithridates! Fatal tidings I bear, and black, and horrible the deed I must perform.

ROXANA.

Oh'speak at once, Suræna.

Suspense is torture. Does my bloody brother Relentless purpose still Monimia's death?

SURÆNA.

Oh princess, all the fortunes of thy house
Are blasted. Rome's proud genius has prevail'd,
And Mithridates must be great no more.
But never shall his yet unconquer'd hands
Be gall'd with chains. He never will be dragg'd
After the victor's chariot.

ROXANA.

Let him die

Ere such dishonour stain him!

SURÆNA.

Fear it not,

Roxana, in the midst of hopeless ruin,
His lofty soul will never brook disgrace.
Nor shall it reach his house. 'Tis therefore, princess,
I stand before thee.

STATIRA.

Oh my fears! What mean'st thou? SURÆNA.

Rather than wear the chains of a proud victor, Be led about in insolence of triumph, The scorn, and mock'ry of the vulgar crew, The wife, and sisters of the king of Pontus Will surely gladly die.

# MONIMIA.

My doom was passed

Before. My mind was fix'd on death. The victory Of Mithridates would to me have brought No mercy. Evening must have seen me perish. Nor does his fall disturb me. Do thine errand. Behold my bosom. Strike.

### SURÆNA.

He bids you choose

The manner of your deaths.

## STATIRA.

Alas, alas,

Where shall I fly? Oh whom entreat for succour; Have mercy on my tender youth, Suræna! Oh spare me, spare me! Bear me to my brother. Let me embrace his knees, and weep and pray! He may relent. I never could offend him.

#### SURÆNA.

Oh princess, think that my reluctant voice

Declares his absolute will. He cannot hear you,

At distance far he rallies a few followers,

Perhaps to try again the chance of war,

Perhaps not unreveng'd to fall. But you

Have no escape. Th' insulting foe approaches,

And he who now, with anguish and despair,

Performs his monarch's orders, some short minutes

O'erpast, must fall beneath their swords. Though born

A subject, yet I bear no grovelling soul,

And gladly perish, when th' alternative

Is death, or chains.

### ROXANA.

Now, by the glorious sun,
My brother has thought nobly. From my soul
I thank him. He has sav'd me from dishonour.
And as a bride moves to the nuptial rite,
So shall Roxana meet the deadly blow,
That sets her far beyond the reach of Rome.
But this unworthy girl, no more my sister,
Tinges my cheek with shame. In all her veins
There runs no drop of our imperial blood.
Come, my Monimia, let us join our hands.
Together will we tread the path, from whence
No step returns. I woo'd thee late to live,

And would have died to save thee. Let me now Be warm'd, and strengthen'd by thy great example. Soon shall we be at rest, and fair renown Shall sound our praise to earth's remotest ends, And glory spread her brightest rays around us.

MONIMIA, UNBINDING THE DIADEM.

Behold this fillet, bright with glittering gems,

Symbol of royal state! 'Tis strange, methinks,

This shining toy should be the instrument

Of peace and comfort! In its circle, care,

Pale grief, and disappointment, oftenest dwell.

Guests all unknown to me, till round my brow

I bound the mischief. But 'twill serve our purpose,

And all my sorrows past shall be forgotten.

[As she spreads it out between her hands, it breaks. Oh faithless bauble! Dost thou then deny me Ev'n this sad office? Hence, I spurn thee from me. Oh never more let hapless woman trust thee! Bring me the cup.

#### STATIRA.

Monimia! Do not drink it!

The sight will kill me, or disturb my brain.

Do not, Roxana, be thine own destroyer!

Oh spurn me not. Oh pity me, my sister!

Poor victim, peace. Resistance would be vain.

Fate seals our doom. The time, long pre-ordain'd,

Is come, when we must prove the common lot.

Unhappy maid! She sinks opprest with woe.

Support, and gently sooth her, my Cleone!

[The noise of the battle approaches.

CLEONE. (Aside.)

The tumult louder grows. Oh where, Leander,
Where dost thou linger? Oh ye gods, who hold
Olympus, favourable still to Greece,
Here speed his course!—Oh stay, my gracious mistress,
Behold thy faithful handmaids! See, absorb'd
In grief they stand. Oh grant a last embrace!

SURÆNA.

Fain would I not disturb your tender parting,
But the swift foe comes on. We must be sudden.

[Cleone flings her arms about Monimia.

My queen! my friend! Oh first in this embrace Let me expire!

ROXANA.

Bring me the fatal beverage.

Ah no, Roxana! This pre-eminence Yet let Monimia claim-Oh, set me free From her strong grasp-My poor Cleone!-Now I come; but first to the immortal gods, Whose providence now bids our woes have end, Make we libation—So-(drinks.) 'Tis done. Approach My friends, receive my last embrace.

### ROXANA.

'Tis bravely done. Roxana's turn is next. The deadly draught is welcome to my heart. Thus I defy the foe, and laugh to scorn His impotent pride. [Drinks.

SURÆNA OFFERING THE CUP TO STATIRA. Duty bids me, princess-

### STATIRA.

Avaunt, ye dreadful ministers! Remove Far from my sight the instrument of death! Oh, grant me but a moment, one short hour. 'Tis all I ask. I then shall be compos'd. Alas, it is no easy task to die!

[Suræna signs to the guards, who advance. What mean these frowning spectres? Hide me, save me,

Hide me, Cleone, from their dreadful looks!

They come, they come to seize me! Bear me hence,
I sicken at the sight! I can no more

Support. I faint, dim shades surround me, Oh-

Oh gently bear her hence. Short be her pains! Such mercy your inhuman lord permits.

[Suræna and the guards carry off Statira.

# SCENE V.

MONIMIA.

Oh my Roxana, yet again my tears

Must flow for poor Statira. Here behold,
Ye simple tenants of the rural shed,
Who at your humble lot repine, behold
The wife and sisters of a king!

ROXANA.

Oh never

Did gentle peace dwell under gilded roofs.

Ah, my Statira, how my bleeding bosom

Thinks o'er with pangs each angry word I spoke!

And yet heaven knows I lov'd thee! At th' approach

Of death, my lofty spirit fails. How poor

Seems now the greatness of the Pontic king!

How vain the pride which late drew forth my praise!

I sink apace.—I feel the deadly draught

Cold at my heart.—My damsels, lead me in.

Farewell, my dear Monimia! Oh Cleone,

Support my dying friend. Oh light of day,

No more shall I behold thee!—

[She is led off.

[A loud alarm.]

CLEONE.

Hark, how near

The clash of arms. He comes, Leander comes. Oh, what a sight is here!

[Monimia has sunk upon a couch.

AN ATTENDANT.

The guards are forc'd.

The palace reeks with slaughter. Calling loud Upon Monimia's name, the hostile chief Springs forward, and before him heaps the dead,

CLEONE.

In evil hour he comes, and finds despair !

# SCENE VI.

ENTER LEANDER.

LEANDER.

Cleone, speak, if yet Monimia live?

Behold her there.

LEANDER.

Oh sight of tenfold horror!

Oh tyrant! Does eternal vengeance sleep?
Was it for this I fought? Oh cruel fortune!
Among so many weapons could not one.
End my sad life, ere I beheld Monimia
Thus basely murder'd?—Soft—she breathes! The gods
May yet propitious hear my vows.

CLEONE.

Leander,

Indulge not fruitless hope. Through every vein Swift poison glides. Ev'n now the damp of death Bedews her brow. To drink her parting breath, Catch the last ling'ring glance, the last adieu, Is all that fate allows.

MONIMIA.

Ah me, that pang

Was death! Ere now Roxana is at peace.

The poison lingers in my icy veins.

Oh Juno, oh, release me!

LEANDER.

Dear Monimia,

Look up, behold Leander at thy feet.

Thus do I find thee? Oh more lov'd than life!

O speak to me! Oh raise thy gentle eyes,

Though death's cold hand lies heavy on them! Speak,

In pity to my grief!

MONIMIA.

Alas, Leander!

Thy voice is soothing to my dying ear!

And it is sweet, ev'n in this last sad moment,

To own that I have lov'd! Oh, gently raise me!

Fain would I gaze upon thee. My weak eyes

Can scarce discern thee. Love my memory.

Dark shadows flit around me. Now I seek

In vain to find thee. Oh, Leander, oh,

And thou, Cleone, lend your gentle aid;

Support my sinking frame! Thus in your arms

To die, is—Oh——

[She dies.

LEANDER.

She's gone! Oh take me with thee

Join us, ye powers, in death! I will not live.

Monimia, oh Monimia, pale and breathless!

[He throws himself by her.

CLEONE.

These are thy works, ambition! Tyrant pride:
These are the triumphs by thy power achieved!
But this poor victim shall the righteous gods
Avenge, and make the cruel Mithridates
An awful lesson to the lords of earth!

\*\*\* THE subject of Monimia is of that kind. which has not only most frequently occupied our modern dramatic authors, but has been found most generally interesting, and consonant to the habits of European society. This is the only excuse which can be offered for it; for the moral is defective, and the subject itself destitute of importance and dignity. Leander, who deserts a service, to which he had bound himself by a voluntary engagement, in order to betray the interest, and seduce the wife of his employer, is dismissed without reproof or punishment. The king, who bravely asserts the independence and honour of his crown, is defeated and ruined; and the queen, by resolutely preferring her duty to her wishes and interest, is subjected to a cruel death. Such, indeed, is the course of worldly events, and the lot of human nature; to the credit of which it must be observed, that in all ages, and in all countries, even where the light of religion has penetrated least, examples of suffering virtue have obtained the approbation of mankind; and the love of good reputation, whether present or posthumous, has been always a most powerful motive of human actions, auxiliary to religion, and in some degree supplying its place. To exhibit such examples has therefore a tendency to promote the cause of virtue. We feel that the proper limit of duty, and condition of fame, is perseverance to the end. And in the unfortunate event, we consider not a circumstance of discouragement, but the measure of the virtue we admire. The exhibition of mixed characters is to be justified by similar reasoning. The world has never seen (for perfection is not compatible with humanity) a human being perfectly virtuous. But man, limited, and imperfect, and vicious as he is, is capable of particular virtues, and upon particular occasions may display them in their greatest force and beauty. The magnanimity and courage of Mithridates may deserve our praise, and excite our emulation, though we turn with disgust from his ferocity and pride: and we may admire and approve the generous spirit and honourable constancy of Monimia, though she does not appear exempt from the frailties of her sex.

A friend of the Author has objected to the character of Monimia, as it is drawn in the play, that "it is so inconsistent as to be irreconcilable with poetical probability. She falls in love with Leander, and confesses her passion without reserve. She then sees him, and appoints him clandestinely to meet her maid. But when Mithridates orders her to be killed she feels remorse; and though she was in a fair way of consenting to run away from him when he was kind, the moment his intention of murdering her is known, she is determined not to escape; and then the persuasions of his sisters seem to change her resolution, which can hardly be supposed to furnish stronger motives than hatred, love, and revenge." The Author will not attempt to defend the general conduct of the play, but those who may peruse

it attentively will perceive that this criticism is not correct. Monimia is uniformly actuated by the sense of honour, and the love of fame. She is, indeed, surprised into entertaining for a moment, and even deliberating upon a proposition very agreeable to her inclinations, but inconsistent with her honour. The struggle between the contending motives is short, and her resolution is finally taken before she is acquainted with the intention of Mithridates to put her to death. The motives which had prevailed over love, and the desire of present happiness and security, prevail also over the fear of death. The deliberation is never resumed with a view to the proposition first made by Leander; and when the sisters of her husband suggest the possibility of preserving her life, it is professed to be, without hazard to her fame or duty. The course of events extinguishes this prospect, and she is then entirely engaged with the hope of dying in such a manner, that her name may be enrolled with the heroines of antient times. It may be said that too great a power is here attributed to so vain a motive as the love of fame; but it should be recollected that we are describing the manners of other ages; and those who are conversant with the Greek tragedians, will recollect numerous examples to prove, that the effect of this feeling, even upon the softer sex, is not exaggerated here. The Iphigenia of Euripides has been arraigned upon the same ground as Monimia by the grave authority of Aristotle; but the wish, and the endeavour to escape from evil, is not inconsistent with a resolution to bear

with firmness, when escape becomes impossible, or cannot be attempted without the sacrifice of duty or of honour. Even a temporary lapse is not sufficient to fix the imputation of inconsistency of character. If virtue is finally triumphant, such a vacillation is only a proof of the difficulty of the struggle, and enhances the merit and glory of perseverance. The contest between human passions and the sense of duty, is the proper subject of tragedy. To exclude it would be to deprive that branch of poetry of much of its beauty, and all its instruction.

This poem was begun in 1784. The two first acts were then written; it was not finished till some years after.

The name of the wife of Mithridates was Monime. The Author thought himself justified in substituting a name of a more agreeable sound, and better suited to English verse, though not strictly Greek.

# THE FALL OF CARTHAGE.

Πόλει τ' ἀρήγειν, καὶ θεῶν ἐγχωρίων Βωμοῖσι.—Αιχ. επί. επι. Θης.

Excessêre omnes adytis arisque relictis,
Dii quibus imperium hoc steterat. Ving. Æn. 2.

## PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Nemesis,

Fear,

Madness,

Punishment,

Asdrubal.

Barsine.

Senators.

Messengers.

Chorus of Carthaginians.

SCENE, Carthage.

## THE FALL OF CARTHAGE.

#### NEMESIS.

"From the star-paved court of highest Jove," The minister of his almighty will, I come. What guilt of miserable man Flies this all-searching eye? Ye lofty thrones! Ye cities! seats of government and arts! On whom, well pleas'd, the universal sire Smiles, when with holy awe, and faith unmov'd, In humble hope you wait on his decrees; But sends me forth, whose train the furies lead, With fear, and mental blindness, and despair, To scourge, and to destroy, when nations, swell'd With vain presumption, confident in strength And wisdom not their own, forget what arm The thunder wields; or thankless, negligent, And sunk in coward sloth, recoil appall'd, Or move not, when his omens bid proceed.

Ye cities! and thou, Carthage! chief, where lull'd By soul-corrupting wealth, thy dastard sons Upon the altar of luxurious ease Have bound their country's glory! Shake not all Thy towers and temples, at the near approach Of the avenging power, whose shout in vain Sounded from Cannæ to the Lybian shore, And bad thee grasp the sceptre of the world? It comes, thine hour fore-doom'd! Fear, let thy touch Of ice chill every heart! and, Madness, every mind Pervert with folly! Lest, even yet, firm prudence, And valour never daunted, should contend With fate, and win almighty Jove to spare! Thou, Punishment! rouze all thy terrors, call Destruction from beside the bickering flame Of Phlegethon, and the dread sisters, sprung From Acheron and Night, o'er falling battlements Well pleas'd who hover, listening to the shriek Of matrons, and of violated maids, While fierce Envo bathes in human gore. No vulgar city to your rage I give. The towering queen of Lybia falls: her fleets No more shall fix her sway in distant realms, Spain or Trinacria, and their gather'd wealth

Pour into lofty Byrsa. All the stores
Carthage can boast, proud seat of art and trade,
Become the victors' prey, and the rich spoils
Of war, and trophies by the heroes won,
Whose dreaded names, even now not without fear
Pronounc'd, shake through her seven fam'd hills
Imperious Rome. Through streets and arsenals,
Through all the punic palaces and fanes,
Roars the devouring flame, the victors' shout
Sounds, and captivity and death prevail!
Such is my doom. Perform it, dreadful powers!
Mean time to other climes I bear the wrath
Of Jove, and states and thrones o'erwhelm with ruin,
Upon the arrogant victor soon to fall.

## CHORUS.

Alas, my brethren, my presaging soul
Laments our country's fall! What horrid omens!
What portents threat on earth, in air! Our foe,
Our antient foe, one foot on Sicily,
One on Iberia, once the main supports
Of our renowned state, with lifted arm
Stands to destroy us. Who shall ward the blow?
What other Hannibal's exhaustless mind
Weigh against many armies? But behold

## THE FALL OF CARTHAGE.

The noble Asdrubal, and with him comes
His virtuous wife, the fair, and good Barsine.
A gallant chief he is, who loves his country,
And breathes the spirit of the line of Barcas.

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#### BARSINE.

Oh, Asdrubal! the voice of gentle love,
Connubial love, and fond parental feeling,
Moves not the stubborn temper of ambition.
Too well I know it. Yet the bounteous gods
Form'd thee of softer mould, and I have seen thee
Gaze, with a lover's fondness, on Barsine;
Have seen the starting tear bedew thy cheek,
While round thy knees our blooming children clung.
Yet Carthage then was dear, but not alone;
Dear were thy children, dear thy faithful wife,
Whom now, with desperate mind resolv'd on war,
Courting destruction, thy relentless heart
Disdains, nor heeds their sighs, nor dreads their ruin.

#### ASDRUBAL.

Alas, Barsine, this is not the time

When Venus strews the nuptial couch with flowers!

Thou dost not know the heart of Asdrubal;

Not me the pomp of horrid war delights.

I do not seek in this disastrous state

The soldier's laurel. Often have I heard,
And deep the tale impress'd my youthful mind,
How Carthage, thankless Carthage, basely envious
Even of her proper glory, blasted all
The wreaths my ancestor from Cannæ bore,
And Hannibal, before his thread was run,
Perish'd an exile in a foreign land.
But while I breathe, and can but lift a sword,
The soul of Barcas which inspires my breast,
Will bear no foreign yoke, and least of all
The yoke of Rome.

BARSINE.

Thy warlike ancestor,
Though nurs'd in hate of Rome, and sworn to vengeance,
Yet counsel'd peace. Ye venerable men,
Whose hoary heads announce experienc'd wisdom,
And challenge and respect from headlong youth,
Oh join with me, and teach my Asdrubal,
That to seek contest with superior power
Is madness, and not courage.

CHORUS.

Noble Asdrubal,

Her speech is prudent. Carthage is no longer

What erst she was, when, victor at Saguntum, Amilcar's son conceiv'd the great design In Italy to plant the Punic standard, Riyal of Rome.

## ASDRUBAL.

Doubt not my love, Barsine.

'Tis in yon camp alone I dare concert

Thine, and our children's safety. In this city

Rome dictates law. I have borne arms for Carthage,
And here am deem'd a criminal. Good friends,

Mistake me not. I hunt not martial fame;

Well have ye spoke. Then fell the name and glory

Of Carthage, when a base and servile herd,

Frugal of gold, but prodigal of safety,

From Cannæ's conqueror withheld supply.

I court not war, and would to gracious Jove,

Such was our humble state, that never more.

Might Punic chieftain hope to rear a trophy,

So we were not reserv'd for Roman chains.

#### CHORUS.

Sufficient ill to every hour belongs,

And safety oft the gods bestow, when reason

No longer points to hope. The wise, my son,

Anticipate not misfortune.

ASDRUBAL.

Wisdom's part

It is, by timely forethought, to prevent it.

BARSINE.

Oh then, my Asdrubal, with the suffetes, And with the senate join thy prudent care! War is not yet begun, and lenient speech, With moderation link'd, may yet maintain Our peace with Rome.

#### ASDRUBAL.

Our peace with Rome! Ruin and slaughter peace! For while I speak, near and more near, the Roman, With fleets and hostile armies, hems us round.

#### CHORUS.

Our prudent governors, still vigilant
For Carthage, have already sent to learn
Their cause of preparation, and remove
Each pretext malice, or the tyrant lust
Of power, for new aggression may invent.

## ASDRUBAL.

Most prudent governors no doubt we boast,

And able statesmen they may well be called,

Who with a breath can turn or dissipate

Armies, by antient hatred rous'd to war,

And marching to prepar'd, and certain conquest!

CHORUS.

Perhaps thou art deceiv'd. Our arms laid up,
And all our conquests render'd back, Emporiæ,
Though our unquestion'd right, abandon'd too,
Not to give cause of jealousy or anger,
The Romans cannot fear us.

#### ASDRUBAL.

No: they cannot.

We have no armies, theirs are strong and numerous. Our navy is dismantled, theirs at sea,
Furnish'd for war. We have not injur'd them;
We covet not their city: all we seek
Is peace, and rather than not be at peace
We'll buy it with the means that should defend us.
Strong motives these for Rome to war upon us!
A mighty booty, and a weak resistance,
For weak it must be, since 'tis unprepar'd.

#### CHORUS.

Restrain the licence of thy speech. The Romans, Though foes to Carthage, are a people bound. In civil rule, who know and worship justice, Not a rude band of robbers.

#### ASDRUBAL.

Rome, old man,

No doubt may boast a noble origin;
And I confess her sons are not degenerate
From those most just and valiant men, whom Romulus
Led forth to practise on the neighbouring cities
Those sacred precepts of unerring justice,
Which from his savage nurse their chief imbib'd.

#### CHORUS.

If they revere not justice they profess it. Let them still want a pretext, and we shall Avert their arms from us.

#### ASDRUBAL.

A pretext, father!

What pretext need the Romans seek? Whose censure Have they to dread?

## CHORUS.

Surrounding states and kingdoms.

The world, which soon would join in league, and point United arms against the capitol,
Which, if profess'd a foe to justice, would
Be deem'd the foe of all.

#### ASDRUBAL.

Surrounding states! What states, what kingdom shall contend with Rome? Macedon is no more, and Greece survives Only to use her flattering tongue, and court Roman dominion. Can th' enervate east Speak proud remonstrance, and forbid the commonwealth To pour her conquering troops beyond her frontier? But lo, our rulers! lo the worthy chiefs Of our most prudent senate. My Barsine, Retire, my love, I will but learn the posture Of public interests, then fly to lose, In thy dear converse 'midst our smiling children, The cares of state. Say, fathers, is our embassy Return'd, and breathes the answer peace or war?

#### SENATOR.

Our hope of peace, we trust, will not be frustrate; Nor has the commonwealth relied in vain On her unvarying just and moderate counsels. The Romans must at length resign their hatred, When with the means the motive of ambition Is thrown aside, safety pursu'd, not empire, And safety plac'd not in our arms and power,

But in our not offending.

ASDRUBAL.

Is this language

From Gisco, or the consuls?

SENATOR.

Gisco is not return'd, but he has sent

A trusty messenger to give us tidings Of his reception.

ASDRUBAL.

Fathers, fare you well!

Carthage, farewell! I fear I have no more A country. Might the gods avert her ruin! At least I will not aid it.

SENATOR.

Art thou then

So much the foe of peace, as well as Rome;
Thou canst not bear to hear what speaks not war?

ASDRUBAL.

I would not hear my country's shame and ruin.

SENATOR.

Is peace then ruin?

ASDRUBAL.

Peace by shame to purchase

Is ruin.

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SENATOR.

Peace, whatever be the price, Obtained, ruin is far remov'd, for peace Is safety.

#### ASDRUBAL.

Let the shepherd then make truce
With wolves, nor longer guard his fold. But come,
Hear we these tidings which have fill'd your breasts
With confidence, though while we speak, the legions
Plow the salt deep, the proper reign of Carthage,
To plant their eagles on our shores.

#### SENATOR.

Th' embassador

Here writes the consuls gave him cordial greeting;
Told him the Roman senate, and the people,
Approv'd the temperate conduct of our city,
And meant to shew the world their care for Carthage.
At greater leisure, to th' embassador
They would unfold the measures they design'd
To fix the peace of Africa. Mean time
They will'd him to report this friendly message.

#### ASDRUBAL.

A message, worthy of the Roman name, Tissue of fraud and perfidy, that veils Beneath ambiguous and smooth flattering words

The gifts of friendship, which alone those robbers

Use to bestow, captivity and slaughter!

A MESSENGER.

Fathers, a signal speaks th' embassador Returning, and even now his gally moors In port. Her mast and prow display no streamers, Such as bespeak glad tidings.

ANOTHER MESSENGER.

Reverend fathers,

Hanno, with utmost speed, arrives from Utica, And thus reports. The legions near that place Have landed and encamp'd. The faithless city Sent, by her magistrates, to beg protection, And offer ready aid to war on Carthage. The consul thank'd them, bade them still rely On Rome's protection. Should he need their aid He would employ them, but the Roman people Held amity with Carthage, and he came A friend, but to secure her safety.

SENATOR.

Asdrubal.

Methinks, now listens with a sullen joy, Proud that he prophesy'd his country's danger.

#### ASDRUBAL.

Fathers, not so. My soul is sick with fear
Of ills which threaten Carthage, but I know
The duty of a citizen. Be firm,
Doubt not my zeal, my faith, my prompt obedience.
But Gisco will have reach'd the hall of audience,
There shall we learn what doom the gods prepare.

#### CHORUS.

Fearful and dark is man's estate!

Tost on the troubled sea of life,

The star on which his course should wait,

Fierce tempests shut from sight.

Depriv'd of its preserving light,

Passion misleads, and doubts annoy,

And fraud and force, and hate and strife,

Confederate to destroy!

Who shall proclaim where truth and wisdom dwell?

Does heighth or depth their holy rays conceal?

Their voice has been amidst destruction heard: a

Death has their oracles declar'd:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The 28th chapter of Job is an example of poetical imagination and diction, as sublime as the human mind has ever produced. The Author feels that he has been oppressed, rather than inspired by the greatness of the noble original he has presumed to imitate, and he thinks it necessary to justify the having used it here. The

But to the living gods alone confess'd they shine,
Eternal effluence of the mind divine.
Carthage, then was thy doom pronounc'd!
(Why must a filial tongue thy name upbraid,)
What time by factious fury sway'd,
To glory deaf, untouch'd by patriot flame,
Our sires the victory prepar'd renounc'd,
And Jove indignant turn'd away,
While pois'd in shameful balance lay
Inglorious wealth against their country's fame.

Carthaginians spoke a cognate language, and it appears highly probable that they were familiarly acquainted with that most interesting and lofty poem, the fame of which must have been at least co-extensive with the dialect in which it was composed. It is, therefore, not out of character for the Chorus to borrow from it, both the thought and the expression.

The Arabian poet has personified Destruction. "Destruction and Death say, We have heard the fame thereof." It is upon this authority that the defence of the personification of Destruction in a subsequent Chorus and in the Prologue of this play must depend. The word may signify either the destroying power, the effect produced by his agency, or dissolution abstractedly. In the two latter senses, it is not a subject for personification. In the former it may be personified with as much propriety as Death, signifying as it does, with respect to political and mechanical existences, precisely the same as is signified by Death, with respect to animal and vegetable life.

Yes, brethren, yes, then Carthage was undone, When she refus'd the call of great Amilcar's son! Yet, Carthage, yet resume thy sword; Thy mighty gods, so long ador'd, May give thee glory in thy fall. Perhaps, by thy repentance won, The sisters may thy fate recall, And bid their spindles backward run: The Roman vanquish'd fly the shore; Apollo may his light restore, And from proud Byrsa's height Again display the signal of victorious fight. For when Amilcar led (Oft from my sire I heard the tale with dread) To the high altar crown'd His noble boy, begirt with holy priests around, Upon his brow he laid His hand, while thus he said, Thy life be sacred to the state: Swear to the Roman foe eternal hate! Know that in empyrean day, Next to the throne of Jove, and best belov'd, Nor ever from his view remov'd,

To share his counsels and inspire, Sits Liberty. The universal sire On her directs the glorious ray Of his all-piercing sight, And views her with delight. In panoply divine array'd, And sovereign state. Appears the glorious maid; And amidst the clash of fight, Faction's roar, and treason's night, The doom of nations she prescribes to fate. Those who shrink from threat'ning harms, Coward hearts, and nerveless arms, Bend beneath a foreign lord, While those are great and free, who fearless bear the sword.

SEMICHORUS.

Horror and shame! How low is Carthage fallen!

What means my brother?

SEMICHORUS.

Shall my tongue relate

What known will rend thy heart with keenest pangs? If yet thou hast not heard the shameful tale,

Better to die than living to be witness

Of our dear country's death, or trembling see

Th' inevitable ruin near approaching.

SEMICHORUS.

What ruin? Speak.

SEMICHORUS.

The Roman in our city

Commands with absolute sway.

SEMICHORUS.

The gods forbid!

SEMICHORUS.

Asdrubal is from Carthage banish'd.

SEMICHORUS.

Asdrubal!

Our bravest citizen! What crime can calumny Impute to Asdrubal?

SEMICHORUS.

The troops of Carthage
He led to battle, and with discipline
Train'd their rude valour. He might point their swords
Against th' accursed foe, whose chains even now
Gall our once nervous arms. These are the crimes
Which rouse the Roman vengeance, and our senate,
Our servile senate, vote as Rome commands.

SEMICHORUS.

But was it not reported from the consuls

That Rome approv'd the conduct of our city,

And promis'd friendship to us?

SEMICHORUS.

Hear the sequel:

With Gisco came a Roman deputy, Commission'd to declare the consul's will.

SEMICHORUS.

Alas, alas, the consul's will in Carthage! We had a country once.

SEMICHORUS.

Reserve thy sorrows.

They will have bitter cause to flow hereafter.

Now hear what I have witness'd. The proud Roman,
Admitted to the council of the fathers,
Bade them rely upon the favouring judgment
Of Rome, no more a foe. With study'd insolence
While thus he trampled on our prostrate rulers,
Then talk'd he, what I know not, of the dignity
Of his republic. We it seems had rashly
Doubted her justice, and, because redress
Was but delay'd some twenty years or so,
Appeal'd to arms against the faith of treaties.

## 234 THE FALL OF CARTHAGE.

Therefore, to save the dignity of Rome, The leader of those armies (factious doubtless, And acting without warrant from the state) Must be deliver'd up, unless the city Herself would mark him for distinguish'd punishment, And thus remove the charge of foul connivance, Which else must rest upon her. In th' assembly Was silence, but that silence was despair, Not generous indignation. Asdrubal Rose, and with stately step, and scornful eye, Mov'd through the hall. No voice was heard entreating His stay. Not one accompanied or honour'd The man whom all their coward hearts approv'd. They gaz'd upon him as a criminal Condemn'd. He look'd a hero, more than man; Rather the guardian god of ruin'd Carthage Quitting her falling walls. Direct he held His course unmov'd, till at the western gate He paus'd, and turning once again survey'd The city: spreading then his hands abroad, He seem'd to pray, then proudly pass'd the portal, And moving onward, soon was seen no more. Mean time our senate with unanimous vote, And acclamation as of joy and zeal,

(Whereat the Roman inly smil'd) decreed

His banishment. O'erwhelm'd with grief and shame,

From that polluted place I fled.

CHORUS.

Oh Juno, of the Tyrian name, The gracious guardian once! All glorious in thy golden car, Apollo, ruler of the day! Who on the Libyan shore The kindest influence of thy genial beam Didst erst delight to shed! Why, when th' invigorating flame Calls from the fertile glebe The richest growth, and Libya's torrid land, Prolific of brave spirit, void of fear, And of unconquerable strength, Sends forth the lion's lordly pride, And the huge elephant to share The hero's toil, and mock at purple war: Does the pale genius of the north Shake terror o'er our walls. And see the sons of noble sires Who sought the foe, and conquer'd On the Campanian field:

Ev'n in their native city bend
Their necks, for thraldom form'd, beneath the yoke?
Oh depths of the divine decree!
The sad effects we feel,
The hidden cause in vain explore.
Man, fleeting man, of wisdom boasts,
And tells of high exploits in arms,
In vain. As Jove revolves the urn
In which the lots of good and ill he throws,
The hero turns his back for flight; the wise,
Bereft of reason, dotes
In a delirious dream.

#### SEMICHORUS.

But lo, another of our brethren brings
Tidings; but nought of good that cloudy brow
Imports.

#### SEMICHORUS.

The children of the noble Asdrubal Our senate to the Roman has deliver'd.

## SEMICHORUS.

Banishment

Is then too light a pain for those who serve Their country!

## SEMICHORUS.

Asdrubal, though banish'd,
Might prove rebellious, and disturb the purpose
Of generous Rome to fix the peace of Africa.

SEMICHORUS.

This proof of base servility, no doubt, Has satisfy'd ev'n Rome's malignant pride.

SEMICHORUS.

The haughty deputy, with cold disdain,
Heard it unfeeling. Rome, he slightly said,
Heeded not what a private man, an exile,
Might in his impotent fury dream. His orders
Were peremptory to require a pledge
For the good faith of Carthage. He demanded
Three hundred children of the noblest houses
In all the city. From th' assembly burst
A groan of horror. Soon the dreadful tidings
Had reach'd the crowd without, and lamentation
Rings now through all our streets. But lo, Barsine!
Her grief, ye see, is such as well beseems
The glory of her race, the wife of Asdrubal.

CHORUS.

Oh noble matron, we partake thy grief!

Thy children from thee torn, thy husband banish'd,

Who would not mourn for thee?

BARSINE.

Oh friends and countrymen, Mourn not for me, but Carthage! Mourn for all Her matrons! all are widow'd. Mourn for all Her little ones, whose innocent blood shall flow Ev'n in their parent's sight, whose brains be scatter'd, Dash'd by the ruthless foe against our pavements, And on the altars of our household gods. Wise were the counsels of thy prescient mind, My Asdrubal, which rashly I disputed. But deem not, friends, that in this awful hour, Barsine will do aught base and unworthy, Or of herself, her husband, or the glory, The ancient glory of our wretched country. No Roman on the wife of Asdrubal Shall lay polluting hands, nor the high capitol Behold the rabble point, and hear them shout, As the poor captive passes. Ere that day, That shameful day, the air of this my country Shall drink my latest breath. But oh, my children! CHORUS.

Alas, in them fortune shall wound thee still!

Thou canst not save them from the victor's chain,

And their unconscious youth shall grow in bondage; Their name, their country, and their sire, unknown.

BARSINE.

For those dear pledges of connubial love And duty, my maternal heart bleeds fast. If they survive, though from a line of heroes Their high descent derives, they must wear out, Under hard task-masters, their mournful years. They say the Spartan mother with firm hand Will, in a filial bosom, plant the sword Ere infamy shall reach it. That I bear not A soul of such fierce texture brings no blush Into my cheek. I cannot lift my hand Against my babe, and take away the life Which from my womb it drew. And yet I feel I know not what of hope and expectation, That the just gods my fathers still have serv'd, Will snatch them from the worst of human ills, A life of shame.

#### SEMICHORUS.

The gods who frown on Carthage,
Which has put off the qualities, forsaken
The duties, which their never changing laws,
And perfect will, approve, and have commanded,

Will see, benignant yet, the few brave spirits
Whose virtue keeps its tenor. Not abortive
Shall be thy pious hope.

#### BARSINE.

Worthy friends, By your auspicious words my soul is cheer'd; Or here, or in some world unknown, that virtue Which heaven beholds approving must be blest. Nor have those prophets old, those holy lips Which touch'd with great Apollo's purest fire, Have rais'd to future times their awful song. Breath'd empty fables. But in purer air, Celestial, purg'd from elemental dross The spirits of the great, the wise, the good, Live, and the fruit of virtue, in serene Unchanging peace, where death no more has power, There Hannibal to his brave sire Recounts how well his precepts were obey'd; And patriot feeling binds unfading laurels On Sophonisba's brow. Her glorious cup, Whose pure libation with propitious smile Juno receiv'd, she has to us bequeath d.

SEMICHORUS.

See, noble lady, Casthalo approaches,

He seems indignant. Have we fall'n below

Our last disgrace, when honour, and when justice,
Fled from our walls with banish'd Asdrubal?

And all our matrons wish'd that barrenness

Had fix'd a curse upon them, ere the city

Had cast her noblest offspring forth to be

Slaves in the houses of their country's foe?

SEMICHORUS.

I know not if my features can speak truly What my heart harbours, but contempt and scorn Possess it all, and stifle fear and rage.

SEMICHORUS.

Whom dost thou scorn?

SEMICHORUS.

And can'st thou ask me whom!

When such the minds that rule, and such the people

Whose stupid souls approve, whose dastard hands

Obey their shameful counsels.

SEMICHORUS.

Shall not subjects

What lawful rulers bid perform? If not, All civil sway must perish.

SEMICHORUS.

Look abroad.

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See how you heap that glitters in the sun
Still grows, and grows, while, thronging round, the
people

Press to lay down their burdens!

SEMICHORUS.

'Tis an heap

Of armour. All the echoing streets resound With frequent steps, and every citizen Bears shield or sword, or breastplate.

SEMICHORUS.

There was a time, my friends, when rattling arms Rang from the Punic walls a dreadful note To Roman ears!

## SEMICHORUS.

Our generous countrymen, Mindful, I trust, of their forefathers' glory, Will try again the glorious chance of war.

## SEMICHORUS.

The chance of war! And dost thou dream we bear Our armour to affront our country's foe
In battle?

## SEMICHORUS.

Casthalo, my breast beats high.

Oh, blest are they, who at this awful moment,

Can for their country die in arms.

SEMICHORUS.

Conceal.

If such thy thoughts, fast lock them in thy breast.

Those arms are render'd to the Roman. Tears,

Submission, supplication, are the weapons

With which the rulers and the men of Carthage

Defend the safety of the state,

The glory of our fathers.

SEMICHORUS.

Our swords and lances to the foe surrender'd! What dost thou mean?

SEMICHORUS.

Our princes have done this.

Vile traitors! But our people——

SEMICHORUS.

Have obey'd them

As faithful subjects should their lawful rulers.

Carthage spreads forth her unarm'd hands entreating

Peace, not demanding right.

SEMICHORUS.

Can this thing be?

# SEMICHORUS.

Aye, brother, and much more. We humbly beg
To know the farther pleasure of the consul:
We open all our treasures to the robber,
And ask when he will take them,

## CHORUS.

Art thou extinct, thou holy fire!

Thou spirit of the brave and free!

Before whose matchless might

At Salamis, and in Platæa's fight,

The Persian lord beheld his myriads die,

While Greece with voice united, shouted liberty.

Mourn, Carthage, mourn! I see, I see,

Thy guardian gods retire!

Upon Apollo's fane

Dark mist is hung, and lo, above

The temple of the wife of Jove,

To seize her abdicated reign,

What dreadful phantoms lour! The furies there

Rend with screams of death the air!

Utica, thy cursed womb

Teems with the queen of Afric's doom!

Brethren, mark what sanguine clouds
Roll along the gather'd storm!

What godhead his terrific form
In that dark pavilion shrouds?

Destruction comes! His horrid way
Fear precedes, and wild Dismay!

Slaughter sends a dreadful roar,
Soon to bathe in Punic gore!

Rapine, raging for the prey,
Lust, and Cruelty, prepare
Dreadful league! Already they

Anticipate their savage joy!

Drink the frantic matron's tear,
Riot in the virgin's cry!

SENATORS OF CARTHAGE.

Let all the gates be closed. Run to the ramparts All whose yet nervous arms can wield a weapon.

ANOTHER SENATOR,

All you, of feebler age or sex, collect Stones, lead, and fire; and pile the missile deaths Near to our gallant warriors.

ANOTHER SENATOR.

Fly, unroof

Your dwellings, and the rafters shape for lances:

Proud Romans, this our old and sacred city Ev'n yet shall not be purchas'd but with blood.

ANOTHER.

Oh tombs of our forefathers! Holy temples,
And awful images of our great gods!

Never will we forsake you. Here we perish,
Or drive these ravening eagles from our walls.

CHORUS.

What new alarm has mov'd you, reverend fathers, With these ill-boding, and disastrous sounds, To scare the city's peace.

SENATOR.

Oh countrymen,

Have you not heard? The Romans,—how my breast
Burns at the thought! have dar'd to bid us quit
This our paternal soil: to dispossess
Our household gods of their primæval seats;
And never more to tread the earth of Carthage,
Which must become a desert, the repair
Of beasts and birds obscene; and never more
To rear a sail for commerce or for war.

ANOTHER.

Alas the bulwark of our city, Asdrubal, Where art thou now, when Carthage asks thy aid!

ANOTHER.

Alas, alas, Carthage has banish'd thee, Her arm of war!

ANOTHER.

Alas, the precious progeny
Of all our noblest houses sold to bondage!

Let us not waste in womanish laments
The hour of preparation. Ev'n now
The senate meets to cancel (not our shame,
Which no decree can raze) the banishment
Of Asdrubal, and if he yet will pardon,
To supplicate his aid.

ANOTHER.

Will he not rather

Accord him with the foe, who hold in pledge His children, and from his ungrateful country Exact a just revenge?

CHORUS.

Thy erring words

Have wrong'd the noble Asdrubal, who still Lives but for Carthage. You, 'tis true, have wounded His inmost soul; but Carthage claims his duty.

SENATOR.

Prophetic be thy words, for other hope

For Carthage none remains. In yonder camp,

Where Asdrubal has refuge; in those bands Of soldiers who partake their leader's injuries, Her sole defence is plac'd.

ANOTHER.

I know him noble;
But we have urg'd him beyond mortal bearing,
Nor dare I hope his aid.

SENATOR.

With our own lips

We have pronounc'd our doom; with our own hands Destroy'd, ourselves, our country! O'er the future Despair sits brooding.

CHORUS.

Breathe a sad and solemn strain!

Mingle with the thrilling sound

Horror! for our grief profound

Wakes not to a trivial woe,

As when love-sick youths complain,

Or maternal sorrows flow.

Tombs of our renowned sires!
Sacred hearths! Belov'd abodes!
Altars of our household gods!
Doom'd with Punic gore to reek,
Doom'd to blaze with impious fires,
While around the furies shriek.

Dreadful prelude! answer'd soon

By bursting roofs, and crashing walls,

By a nation's dying groan;

While our ancient city falls.

What terrific sights appear!
What dire sounds appal my ear!
Screaming loud, the birds of prey,
Load the air, and blot the day.
All at once, her savage brood,
Lur'd by recent scent of blood,
Forth the howling desert pours,
Swarming o'er our prostrate tow'rs;
O'er our courts and temples spread
With the ghastly heaps of dead!

The dead are blest! All bath'd in tears,
Lo, a mournful troop appears!

Matrons never to behold

Their children more, while pale and cold,
Pierc'd with wounds, their husbands lie,
To gorge the vultures of the sky!

Noble maids, with scatter'd hair,
Fetter'd arms, and bosoms bare,

Trembling at the soldiers cries, Shrinking from licentious eyes!

As the sad train the deck ascends; Fast their streaming sorrows flow, Prescient of a keener woe: Destin'd to the fierce embrace Of that ruthless hostile race, Reeking from their slaughter'd friends.

SEMICHORUS.

Youths of Carthage, grasp the spear! Hoary age to battle fly! Better in the fight to dare, Better in the fight to die, Than to drag the victor's chain; Than to see your children slaves, O'er the far Tyrrhenian waves, Tilling that Campanian plain, Where the Carthaginian sword A noble harvest reap'd of yore. What time astonish'd Rome deplor'd Her bravest warriors cold. And the heap'd measure told How num'rous were the knights who welter'd there in gore.

SEMICHORUS.

Carthage, thou art brave in vain!

When almighty Jove on high
Lifts his balance in the sky,
Destiny, with ruthless hate,
Hangs upon thine adverse scale.
Carthage, thou art brave in vain!
What shall force or skill avail,
When the contest is with fate?
Bow thy spirit! Meet the blow!
Jove inflicts, and thou must bear.
Submit to Jove, but dare the foe!
Glorious still be thy despair.

SEMICHORUS.

Never more our native tougue
Shall to future ages tell,
Mighty deeds in lofty song,
Of chiefs, who for their country fell:
Chiefs, who with undaunted breast,
Firm to stem the battle's tide,
Could the brave to conquest guide.
Sacred, sacred be their rest!
And though mute the lofty song,
Though Carthage sink in hostile fire,
Forgotten though her native tongue;

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Though one vast death embrace

All her devoted race,

Still shall her noble name above the stars aspire.

CHORUS.

The Latian muse shall lift her voice

To speak the glory of her foe!

Calpe repeat the mighty theme;

Trinacria's shore, and Tiber's stream;

And to the wond'ring nations round

The vanquish'd Alps return the sound;

Till in the shadowy realms below

The spirits of the Punic dead,

Proudly erect each laurel'd head,

With all their ancient fire exulting glow,

And in the just renown of patriot worth rejoice.

BARSINE.

Oh friends, I sought you, sooth my throbbing breast,
Torn with conflicting passions! What to fear
I know not, for, alas! I dare not hope.

CHORUS,

Barsine, in this sad and dreadful hour,
What comfort can we speak? We know thy virtues;
We love thy generous soul. But Carthage perishes:
The common doom awaits thee.

BARSINE.

Hear me! hear me!

My children-

CHORUS.

What new cruelty has Rome

Inflicted on them?

BARSINE.

In their father's camp they live!

What dost thou say?

BARSINE.

They are no longer captives!

The gods be prais'd, for these are joyful tidings!

BARSINE.

I am a mother, and my breast must glow With joy for my dear children.

CHORUS.

Give the reins

To joy in such a cause.

BARSINE.

But terror fills

My heart, and horrid thoughts invade my soul.

CHORUS.

We hail thy children's freedom as an omen Propitious to the city.

BARSINE.

To the city?

Oh no, it bodes destruction!

CHORUS.

The just gods

Are mov'd to anger, where their benefits Are, by our thankless and rebellious minds, Perverted to affliction.

BARSINE.

Oh I reverence

The mighty gods, and bless their awful will.

But I have cause to fear.

CHORUS.

So have we all.

But, from this incident, a present joy May flow, and future hope.

BARSINE.

Have you forgot

The bitter wrongs which this ungrateful people Inflicted on my husband?

CHORUS.

No, the shame

Of Carthage cannot be so lightly raz'd.

BARSINE.

Has he not human feelings?

CHORUS.

Asdrubal

Was ever noble.

BARSINE.

Oh, accursed Rome!

Too well, too well vers'd in the fraudful arts
That mould the noblest feelings into crimes!

CHORUS.

Thy thoughts at length are manifest. But say What dost thou know? Or is it wild conjecture That shakes thee thus?

BARSINE.

Oh no: I will not wrong,

With vile suspicion, my beloved Asdrubal, The father of my babes!

CHORUS.

And yet, would Rome

Without conditions give them back? Release

The ties which might his warlike rage confine?

BARSINE.

Most dear to Asdrubal his bleeding country!

That country cast him rudely forth.

BARSINE.

Most dear

To him is virtue!

CHORUS.

Dreadful this suspense!

BARSINE.

Suspense! No more it pains me. On my soul Light beams again. It cannot be: a traitor! Such is not Asdrubal.

CHORUS. '

The provocation

Was past the bearing. His revenge is just.

BARSINE.

More bright, if he forgive, shall be his praise.

CHORUS.

What sudden tumult shakes our walls?

SEMICHORUS,

Behold,

On Byrsa's tower display'd the fearful signal That speaks th' approaching onset of the foe.

BARSINE.

Jove and Apollo, where is Asdrubal? SEMICHORUS.

Far as the eye can reach, the moving plain
Is rais'd in dust, and through the turbid cloud
The glitt'ring helmets, and the lofty ensigns,
Appear, portentous meteors! Toward the grove,
Sacred to Phœbus, and the lofty ridge
That skirts the western Champaign, they direct
Their rapid march.

CHORUS.

It comes! it comes! the fatal hour!
Oh, what great disposing power
Governs its predestin'd course?
Do the furies lash it on,
In their snaky terrors clad?
Or upon its golden wings
Does propitious fortune ride?
It comes! it comes! the fatal hour!
Sovereign of prophetic light,
King Apollo! on my soul
Pour thine intellectual blaze;

And, before my purged eyes, Bid the shadowy future rise.

SEMICHORUS.

Upon the left behold

Another host advancing. They too bend

Their long array toward the same western hills.

SEMICHORUS.

The elephants that lift their towers sublime Above the line, bespeak a Libyan force.

SEMICHORUS.

It is the power of Asdrubal. The march Straight from his camp proceeds.

SEMICHORUS.

Behold, Barsine,

Are those the glitt'ring ensigns of thy husband?

Once the proud boast, the guardian once of Carthage.

BARSINE.

I dare not view the plain.

SEMICHORUS.

Right onward still

Both armies move.

SEMICHORUS.

Before the front of each

The scouts pass rapidly.

BARSINE.

Oh dire forebodings!

Oh the keen anguish of this dreadful hour!
Oh Juno, oh Diana, quick release me!
SEMICHORUS.

Either van

The rising lands conceal.

SEMICHORUS.

Despair! despair!

Asdrubal joins his banners with the Roman.

BARSINE.

Alas, alas! is my hand link'd with that
Which drains the blood of Carthage? Has my womb
Then teem'd with her destruction? Oh, my babes!
More dear than are the fountains of my life!
Dear pledges late of love! Oh, that these eyes,
These mother's eyes, had seen your tender limbs
Asunder torn! Your tender bosoms pierc'd
With ruthless steel! Oh, had my ear receiv'd
Your agonizing shrieks, your dying moans!
Oh then, my children! o'er your sad remains
Carthage had mourn'd for ever, and this earth,
Our native earth, had drunk your precious blood,
An offering holy to our country's gods!

What is your portion now? Detested life
Bought with your father's shame, your father's crime!
With monstrous parricide! the death of Carthage!
Open, oh earth! oh hide me! oh destroy me!

Unconquer'd faith! whom highest Jove Well pleas'd beholds with constant step advancing; O'er golden heaps, o'er diadems and thrones, Disdainful treading: And with regardless eye, beholding Pleasure's bewitching smile, and ever blooming cheek, While o'er thine ears unfelt Passes her siren voice, which men and gods subdues! Oh never more, touch'd by thy holy flame, Shall man above the sordid earth aspire? And in the synod of the gods, Where, with bright Hebe at his side, Th' ambrosial banquet Jove's heroic son partakes, after his glorious labours past, Claim the bright crown to constant virtue due, While the consenting gods applaud, And from their golden harps the sacred Nine Ring out the lofty sounding strain, Responsive to the voice of never-dying praise?

Hades, from th' abyss profound,
Where, amid the lurid flame
Of Phlegethon's detested wave,
The furies brood o'er human woe,
Has sent a dreadful birth to light.
Portentous mischief! From her snaky hair
Atè tenfold poison showers,
Polluting in its course
The sacred stream of Barca's blood.
Oh sacred stream! which fill'd the heart
Of great Amilcar's son!
Canst thou a traitor's bosom warm,
Nor rush indignant from the bursting veins?

I bear no vulgar tidings. Tell me, friends, Where is Barsine?

CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

Lo, the noble matron

Absorb'd in mute despair, with folded hands,

Dishevell'd hair, fix'd eyes, and heaving breast.

MESSENGER.

Alas, the mournful sight compels my tears

To flow. But these dark clouds of grief

Soon shall my voice dispel. I come from Asdrubal.

CHORUS.

From Asdrubal! Has he not leagued with Rome?

MESSENGER.

Asdrubal league with Rome! Old man, thy fears Of reason have bereav'd thee.

CHORUS.

If indeed

My fears prove vain, joy might my mind Unsettle.

MESSENGER.

But my tidings I too long Delay. Barsine, noble matron, rise.

BARSINE.

What voice intrudes upon Barsine's grief?

Oh death, invok'd in vain! Oh Nemesis!

Thy wrath involves the guiltless with the guilty §

What guilt? And why are Nemesis and death Invok'd? I speak of victory and triumph, The city's rescue, and thy husband's glory.

BARSINE.

Of Asdrubal and glory! and the safety Of Carthage!

#### MESSENGER.

Even so. A few swift minutes
Bring him victorious to thee. Every street
Pours out the people to behold their hero
Triumphant over Rome, and greater still,
Over his just resentment.

## BARSINE.

All my heart

Expands to these glad tidings. Easily
I credit thee, thou Messenger of truth!
But every nerve was torpid, and the sources
Of life were chill'd to freezing, when they told
I know not what of treason and of parricide.

## MESSENGER.

Thy children, lady, by the shameful fear
Of Carthage, render'd to the Romans, they
Straight to our camp conducted to the arms
Of their astonish'd father, ransomless
Deliver'd; but insidious was the gift,
Though precious. Hence they bade thy husband learn,
Above his thankless and corrupted country,
To prize a generous foe.

CHORUS.

And, Asdrubal?

MESSENGER.

The gen'rous gift, he said, were best repaid
With corrresponding virtue, and the sword
Which in his country's dear defence he bore,
When Rome, desisting from unjust aggression,
Should turn the tide of war, with zeal as fervent
His arm would wield to vindicate her rights,
Maintain her safety, or extend her glory.
Unmov'd the Roman heard, nor deign'd reply.
And now both armies toward the city drew.
The Roman vanguard, proudly confident,
March'd as to conquest: but the might of Asdrubal
Bravely withstood, and soon they fled repuls'd.

CHORUS.

Heaven hears us yet!

BARSINE.

My children! my dear children!

Be what your father is!

CHORUS.

Shall Carthage lift

Again her head! Our holy altars stand! And from our shore the baffled foe retire!

SEMICHORUS.

The cymbals ring! I hear the shout of myriads!

The hero comes! The saviour of his country!

BARSINE.

My husband, oh my husband, once again Pressed to my heart!

ASDRUBAL.

Barsine, best beloved!

Receive thy children, by the gracious gods

Twice given, not basely purchas'd from the foe.

BARSINE.

Ye precious pledges of a noble love!

Delight and pride of this maternal bosom!

For you are destin'd (may the righteous gods

Confirm the presage!) through remotest ages,

To bid the flame of patriot virtue live,

A sacred trust! deriv'd from your progenitors,

To be the bright inheritance of heroes,

Which from your loins shall spring! Oh, holy gods,

Protectors of our city! You have heard

A mother's prayer! No more, no more I mourn

My children, captives in a foreign land.

Oh Juno, queen of heaven! Connubial Juno!

Repentant Carthage hails the blest return

Of Asdrubal, no more an exile: hails in him

Her guardian, her deliverer, while Apollo

Glorious appears, and manifest in arms,

Th' avenger of the land, displays aloft

His golden sword, and fills the foe with terror.

## ASDRUBAL.

The gods have given us victory and respite,
Short though it be, from war. But soon the tempest
Again shall rage, and make our city shake
To her foundations. Toil on toil succeeds:
Danger on danger. Our's the noble strife,
Th' event the gods decree. I cannot offer,
Till I have washed away these bloody stains,
On their pure altars sacrifice and prayer.
Meanwhile, propitiate you the heavenly powers,
And rouse our youth to daring deeds of arms,
To love of glory, and contempt of death.
Sharp contest yet awaits them. Even now
The Roman moves to storm our ancient rampart,
Retarded, not repuls'd, and in our arms
Is plac'd the city's safety.

CHORUS.

Brace your armour, lift the spear!

Every bosom glow with flame,

With the noble thirst of fame!

Love of Carthage! Scorn of death!

Borne upon triumphant wings,
Hope before our army springs;
On our leader's lofty crest
Victory appears confest,
Shouting, with terrific breath,
O'er the field with slaughter dy'd:
Through the legions scattering wide
Rout, confusion, flight and fear.

Guardians of our sacred walls!

Awful queen, supremely bright!

Goddess of the nuptial rite!

Consort of th' Olympian throne!

Phæbus! who with holy fire

Dost the Delphic maid inspire,

Uttering high mysterious things,

Fates of nations, and of kings!

Jove! almighty, and alone!

To whose sceptre trembling bow

Heaven above, and earth below!

Guardians of our sacred walls!

Ye goddesses and gods! through many an age Revered! Oh save us from the rage Of unrelenting foes!

No vain ambitious vows

To your pure altars, to your honour'd fanes

Your people bear:

The Alpine barrier vast

And wide extended sea,

Dread limits fix'd by your divine decree,

With rash presumption overpast,

Trophies stain'd with blood to rear,

And share the spoil, upon Campanian plains.

Righteous our cause. Propitious hear!

Hear and defend us every righteous pow'r!

For our native soil we fight:

For our sacred country's right:

For our hearths, our genial homes:

For our fathers' honour'd tombs:

For the altars of the gods,

Here who fix'd their dread abodes,

When they bade our city stand,

Queen of Afric's sunny land.

Rush to war, be firm, be brave!

All our guardian powers will save.

Those who nobly wage the fight

For their country's sacred right;

For the dwellings of their sires;

For their altars' holy fires:

Heaven approving must behold!

Youths in conscious virtue bold!

Rush to war, be firm, be brave!

Just is your cause. The righteous gods will save.

## SEMICHORUS.

Oh be thy song prophetic, for behold

The signal of the foe's approach, and hark

How shrill the trumpets sound along our streets,

Which echo with the clang of arms, and tread

Of foot, and horsemen, moving to the walls!

## BARSINE.

Alas I see, I hear what chills my soul.

Oh, Asdrubal, my husband, scarce restor'd,

Again to be torn from me, and again

To hostile spears opposed!

#### ASDRUBAL.

My country calls me,
And glory bears my banner to the walls:
My heart exults, and these our blooming children
The gods shall give, when I am cold, to wage
Successful war for Carthage, and to make

You ravening eagles vail their towering pride Even in the dust.

# BARSINE.

My woman's soul, oh Asdrubal,
Is vanquish'd by its fears! Oh I have wearied
Th' eternal thrones with prayers! No power inclines
Propitious to Barsine. Horrid visions
Before me swim. My country perishes;
The barbarous Roman riots through our city,
And gluts his savage soul with blood and rapine.
And yet, methinks, without a sigh, a murmur,
I could present my bosom to the sword,
And in my heart receive the mortal blade.
But oh thy wounds, my Asdrubal! the slaughter
Of our dear babes!

#### ASDRUBAL.

Oh my Barsine, think From what a noble stock thou art deriv'd! Fearless of danger, prodigal of blood, Whenever Carthage ask'd it.

#### BARSINE.

Oh that Carthage Could be by me preserv'd! Oh that my blood

Might give thee victory! From every vein How would it rush, and empty all my heart!

But thou, my wife, most faithful, most belov'd!

If fate has doom'd me by the sword to fall,

Wilt thou not live?

Oh curse me not, my Asdrubal!

Behold our children.

BARSINE.
Shall they want a father?
ASDRUBAL.

Be that as heaven determines. Duty calls me
To meet the foe in arms. If he prevail,
Wilt thou forsake them? Shall they want a mother?

BARSINE.

Will the foe spare them? Will he let them know
Their mother? from her lips to hear the story
Of their slain father, and their ruin'd country,
Till their breasts glow for vengeance? Never, never.
Why should I live? I cannot help my children;
Their hard nurse must be slavery: the language
Of their forefathers never shall they learn;

Their best inheritance, their country's glory,
Impenetrable darkness shall conceal
For ever from their eyes, and they shall hear
Of Cannæ's fight, nor dream they spring from Barcas.

## ASDRUBAL.

These are ill-omen'd words: no more of this.

The righteous cause, the righteous powers may bless.

For there are gods above, and they delight

In virtue. But that loud alarm upbraids me,

Yet lingering here.

## CHORUS.

Haste to defend the walls!

Their slings and darts already reach the ramparts!

Haste, ere beneath that deadly canopy

Their firm impenetrable phalanx plant

The ladders, and ascend our tottering towers!

First in the fight my fearless lance shall burn.

Juno and Phœbus lighten at thy side.

CHORUS.

Silent, firm, compact; and strong, Move the Roman bands along;

Erect their crests, and bold their tread; Soon to mingle with the dead. Shakes beneath th' affrighted land! Carthage her heroic band Marshals on her lofty towers, All her warriors, all her powers; Every bosom beating high, Full of hope, and firm to die. Hovering o'er, the god of war Sends his dreadful voice afar; Furies swell the horrid sound: Till, from Tartarus profound, Conflict fierce, and wild dismay, Death and ruin rise to day! Many a weeping dame shall tear, Frantic, her dishonour'd hair! Ere the westering sun shall fail, Many a youth lie cold and pale!

Oh execrable lust of boundless sway!

Loves not the spring thy fair Hesperian shore?

And beams not there Apollo's genial ray

On cluster'd vines, and Ceres' golden store?

That thou should'st envy Afric's torrid plain,

Her sandy desarts, and her forests drear,

Where the gaunt lion holds his savage reign,

And livid snakes the poison'd wound prepare;

And listen rather to the groan of death,

The shriek of fear, the widow'd matron's cry,

Than, in thy native bowers, where zephyrs breathe

Through myrtle shades, be blest with social joy!

But ah! Ambition's lofty brow Scorns social joy, and mocks at woe Which others feel. But chance and fate. Though now with cruel hope elate, Thy fancy riot in the spoils, Ev'n now for thee may spread the toils, Which shall thy lawless course confine; Till awful Nemesis assign Shame and anguish to control Thy rage, and scourge thy guilty soul. For she, of sovran deity Conceiv'd by stern Necessity, Hears not the pray'r; but firm to scan The actions, and the heart of man, To these unfolds the glorious rest Of th' Elysian mansions blest;

To those the realms Cocytus laves,
Where roar the Phlegethontic waves;
And the rebellious Titan race
Howls in th' unextinguish'd blaze.

Oh Peace, sweet smiling daughter of the skies!

With whom the sacred choir of muses moves,
Inviting with celestial harmonies

The graces, and the bloming train of loves,
O'er the blest land their influence benign
Gently to shed, with renovating power,
And to the arts, and learning's spirit divine,
Restore soft leisure, and the silent hour!
For ever art thou fled? The clash of arms,
The cries of battle, chill our hearts with fear!
Portentous signs I view! These fierce alarms
Proclaim the last sad day of Carthage near!

SEMICHORUS.

Break off! behold! even now, even now The close-form'd phalanx of the foe Has reach'd the walls. The strokes begin! The warriors shout! the dreadful din Of clashing arms!

SEMICHORUS.

The foremost fall!

The brave defenders of our wall Play well their part!

SEMICHORUS.

Oh shame and woe!

Look yonder where the daring foe Their ladders plant! They mount! They gain The ramparts' height!

SEMICHORUS.

They dare in vain! O'erthrown they lie. The bloody plain Is crush'd beneath the heaps of slain!

SEMICHORUS.

They yield! they yield! they quit the ground! But still the flying spear may wound. Hurl, warriors, hurl the flying spear! Swift fate pursue their broken rear!

SEMICHORUS.

They halt !- Again they form !- Again Their march resounds along the plain!

SEMICHORUS.

With shields compacted close above, Fiercely to th' assault they move. What force shall break that firm array? Oh Jove, thy mighty arm display!

SEMICHORUS.

Engines vast they roll along, That roar like wintry torrents strong. Towers to towers their fronts oppose! No pause the furious battle knows! What showers of darts on either side The ranks of toiling warriors hide! Mingled sounds of terror rise, Clattering armour, threatening cries: Hoarse and loud the trumpets bray: The chief stern voice directs the fray. Helm with helm, and shield with shield, Clashes and rings along the field, Rings th' embattled wall along; Fiercely shouts the fighting throng: Shouts of wrath, and fury drown The wail of pain, the dying groan.

SEMICHORUS.

Oh horror! horror! Lo, the wall Shakes, and tottering bends to fall! Angry powers our arms confound; Earthquake rends the yawning ground! Far and wide the ruins spread, O'er the dying, and the dead.

Many a youth resigns his breath, Roman and Punic mix'd in death!

Pauses dreadful now the fight;
Either host collects its might.
All unveil'd to hostile eyes,
Carthage, sacred Carthage, lies.
Every proud and gorgeous pile
Wakes the fierce desire of spoil:
Fierce desire each breast inflames,
Of gold and gems, and captive dames.

SEMICHORUS.

Ring again the loud alarms!
Rush again the hosts to arms!
How the furious conflict grows!
Blood around profusely flows.
Each unmov'd maintains the strife;
Those for glory, these for life.
Jove extends the golden scale.
Does Carthage, or does Rome prevail?
What thundering voice assails my ear?
Well I know that flaming spear!
Well that glittering crest I know,
That guides the tempest on the foe!

Asdrubal's victorious hand
Vindicates his injur'd land.
From his terror-darting eye,
Rome's pale legions turn and fly.
Shouting loud, the Punic force
Follows his triumphant course.

CHORUS.

Oh wife of Asdrubal, dispel thy grief;
Yet are the gods propitious. Victory
Twines yet another laurel round his brow.

### BARSINE.

Fain would I hail the omen, but my fears
Cling to my heart. Still does the din of arms
Torment my ear, and many a Roman weapon
Thirsts for his noble life.

#### CHORUS.

I wonder not,

Barsine, that thou dar'st not welcome hope:

Great is the city's danger, great thy love.

And fear still waits on love, and grows with danger:
But fair success is present. Hope we then

The gods may send deliverance. If again

Adverse they frown, our grief will flow unbidden.

SEMICHORUS.

I tremble—On the field mine eyes in vain

Explore the might of Asdrubal. No more

I hear his thundering voice. Some dire mischance—

SEMICHORUS.

The gods forefend! 'Tis but the dusty cloud Which rises o'er the field, and shuts the view.

SEMICHORUS.

Would heaven 'twere so! But, look, the battle turns— The tide rolls inward—and our troops, who drove The foe, retire, and scarce defend the breach Against his furious onset.

SEMICHORUS.

'Tis too plain:

The shouting legions urge the rapid charge As sure of victory.

" SEMICHORUS.

Alas, alas,

The breach is storm'd! Our fainting warriors yield.

Oh see, my friends, what numbers fall! the sword Of the fell conqueror rages uncontroll'd. Oh Asdrubal, where art thou?

MESSENGER.

Dreadful tidings

Unwilling I relate. The hope of Carthage Is fallen. The sword of Asdrubal no more Appals the foe.

SEMICHORUS.

Is he then dead?

MESSENGER.

A fate

More dreadful has o'ertaken him.

CHORUS.

Speak not thus

In riddles, but at once declare our woe.

MESSENGER.

Pierced, but with no dishonourable wounds, The chief is captive.

CHORUS.

Captive to the Roman!

And shall the brave defender of his country,

Who drew no sword but in a righteous cause,

Who knew no fear, but to desert his duty,

Be led in cruel triumph through their streets,

The sport and mockery of the Roman rabble?

Oh virtue, art thou then an empty name; Or do the gods abhor thee?

BARSINE

Asdrubal

Wounded! a captive! Yet, oh yet, my children, One refuge fate has left us.

CHORUS.

Woe! woe! Despair! No more I hear The din of war, but far and near Confusion, flight, and frantic fear Fill every street. The ruthless foe No pray'r will hear, no pity know. Heart-rending cry! Can infant age Provoke the manly breast to rage? Hark, 'tis the frantic female shriek! And wilt thou then thy fury wreak, Oh dead to mercy, and to shame, On helpless woman's tender frame?

SEMICHORUS.

Behold, behold, th' affrighted train That crowd Saturnia's holy fane; But war's unbridled rage defies Religion, and insults the skies. SEMICHORUS.

Oh crime! Oh horror, yet untold!
Oh sight too monstrous to behold!
The temple glows with impious fire!
On every side the flames aspire!
The shricking victims to the gate,
Rush frantic from the blazing fate:
Death not less dreadful meets them there,
Torn and mangled by the spear!

SEMICHORUS.

This way at length the tide of ruin rolls. Soon shall we share the slaughter we deplore.

SEMICHORUS.

Barsine—Whither is the matron gone?

I know not. When the fatal tidings reach'd us
Of Asdrubal a captive, and the city
Forc'd by the foe, in both her arms her children
Sudden she caught, and fled with hurry'd pace.

SEMICHORUS.

No vulgar passion moves her generous breast.

She will not brook dishonour. Of some act,

Awful and terrible, expect to hear.

SEMICHORUS.

Oh brethren, Asdrubal of all his house
Survives alone, if yet the foe have spar'd him!

Barsine then has perish'd with her children.

SEMICHORUS.

I am the mournful witness of her death.

Relate the manner.

SEMICHORUS.

To the lofty palace

Whither, in happier days, with garlands crown'd, Her willing steps were led, a virgin spouse, She bore the pledges of her virtuous love. She found the walls deserted. All had fled. All the domestic train, who deem'd the foe, Intent on vengeance, the abode of Asdrubal Would mark for signal ruin. With firm step, And tearless eyes she enter'd, strongly barr'd The massy gate, and in her desperate hands Two torches grasp'd, and to the gilded beams Applied the flame. Then to the lofty roof She led her babes, unconscious of their fate.

There sate the noble matron, to her heart

Pressing them oft, and printing on their lips.

Her fond maternal kisses, while her tears

Flow'd copious, and bedew'd their glossy hair.

But now, through every room, the mounting fire

Raged uncontroll'd. She rose, and gaz'd awhile

Upon the flaming gulf, then, clasping fast

Each tender babe, plung'd headlong, and with them

Died free and spotless, on the funeral pile

Her own hands had prepared.

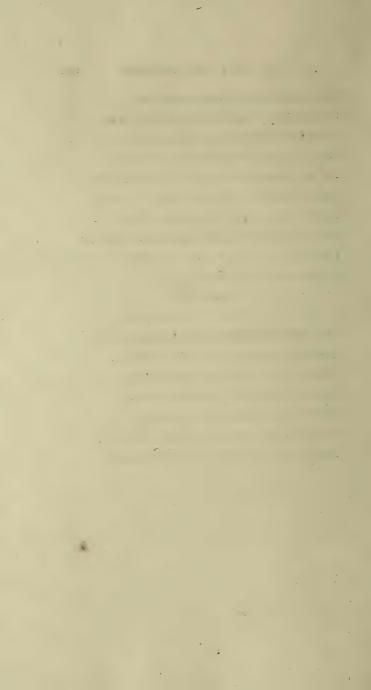
#### SEMICHORUS.

Oh Asdrubal,
Not wholly wretched yet, since unpolluted
Amidst the general wreck of falling Carthage,

Glorious and free, thy best belov'd expired,
Nor shall thy children serve a foreign lord.

I hear the coming foe. Our useless age
For servile tasks unfit, assures us death.

Here sit we down, and wait the Roman sword.



# POLYXENA.

ή καλώς ζήν, η καλώς τεθνηκέναι. Σοφοκ.

# PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Agamemnon.

Ulysses.

Calchas.

Menelaus.

Pyrrhus.

Hecuba.

Polyxena.

Cassandra.

Trojan Captives.

# POLYXENA.

# ACT I. SCENE I.

CALCHAS, ULYSSES.

ULYSSES.

At length, my friend, at length the fav'ring gods
Dispense propitious gales. Our longing eyes
May yet behold once more their native land.

# CALCHAS.

But wherefore this delay? Now when our sails Unfurl'd, and fluttering to the breeze, upbraid The tardy mariner, why does Agamemnon Neglect the proffer'd bounty of the gods? Dark discontent frowns on each Grecian brow, And growing murmurs spread on every side.

### ULYSSES.

Oh Calchas, 'tis an honest indignation,

Nor would I check its course. Yes, let the tempest
Rise; and oh guide its fury, Argive Juno.

VOL. I.

I tell thee, Calchas, all our ten years toil
Was vain: in vain the mighty son of Peleus
Fell, self-devoted, for the weal of Greece.
Troy still survives, and the prophetic maid,
Cassandra, reigns supreme. Greece, conquiring Greece,
Stoops to her sway; and he, the king of kings,
Is a weak woman's slave.

#### CALCHAS.

With grief I have beheld our general's weakness!

Of Agamemnon, prudent, wise, and valiant,

The common father of assembled Greece,

Oh king of Ithaca,

The common father of assembled Greece,
And sworn the foe of Troy, no trace remains.
Alas! how chang'd from him, whom Aulis saw
Greatly triumphant o'er reluctant nature;
Who to a father's tender name preferr'd
A patriot's manly feelings. Much I fear
The frantic multitude—

#### ULYSSES.

Their headlong fury

Might in one common fate involve their leaders,
The guiltless with the guilty. We are urg'd

By strong necessity of self-defence,
And by the noblest motive that can fire

The breast of mortal man, our country's welfare,
To teach the gathering tempest where to fall.
When the swift hours bring death and vengeance on,
And the loud ruin thunders in his ears,
He may shake off this dream of shameful pleasure,
And wake once more to honour and to glory.

# CALCHAS.

Forgive me, wise Ulysses, if I cannot
Approve what you advise. You know the king
Is resolute of soul, nor will be mov'd
By the wild clamours of a lawless rabble;
And, long accustom'd to obey and fear him,
The loudest brawler, when he frowns, will tremble.
Then will the blow we aim'd at Agamemnon
Recoil upon ourselves.

#### ULYSSES.

Dismiss thy fears,
The gods are with us, and the mighty dead
Revisit earth, to aid our holy purpose.
Know then, that while, (as is my wont) last night,
Musing I wander'd by the sea-beat shore,
Near where the sepulchre of great Achilles
Lifts its high head to heaven, a sudden light

Flash'd on my eyes, and clad in radiant arms

The hero rose confest. Frowning he stood,

And shook his threat'ning lance; then with loud voice,

And terrible, while fear shot through my veins,

"Where is your course directed o'er the main,

Ye sons of Greece, while my neglected tomb

Unhonour'd stands?" then vanish'd into air.

CALCHAS.

You much amaze me!

ULYSSES.

Mark my words in silence.

Should we unfurl our impious sails, and catch
The rising gales, while, unappeas'd, the spirit
Of the offended hero hovers o'er us,
Greece might for ever perish: the just gods
Mark the ungrateful head for heaviest vengeance.

CALCHAS.

I cannot penetrate thy purpose; hecatombs

Have fall'n already; and should we renew

Our off'rings, could they shake the monarch's soul?

ULYSSES.

Not the dull ox's blood, which daily streams On sepulchres of vulgar dead, befits The might of Peleus' son. Some captive virgin—

CALCHAS.

Cassandra?

#### ULYSSES.

Fitter victims may be found.
Thou know'st Polyxena, the youngest hope
Of Priam's house, was destin'd to his bed.
The nuptials were prepar'd, those fatal nuptials
Which saw the mightiest of mankind expire;
Fall by a coward's hand. By guile he fell,
At once of life defrauded, and the maid.
And now the injur'd hero's awful shade
Demands his fair reward, his virgin bride.

### CALCHAS.

Oft, by such causes mov'd, the souls of men Departed have forsaken the dark realm Of Proserpine, to taste of purer air.

# ULYSSES.

To vindicate the cause of injur'd Greece
Pelides came, sent by the blue-eyed maid.
The people soon shall know their virtuous leader,
This idol, from whose dreadful frown they shrink;
Who for one smile, one glance from fair Cassandra,
Barters the public welfare. I will rouse

The sleeping camp, and their indignant bosoms
Fire with the memory of their lov'd Achilles,
And the soft pleasures of their native shore:
But thou canst best, oh venerable Calchas,
Declare th' immortal dictates of the gods;
Polyxena must die.

#### CALCHAS.

To heaven's high will

Obedience must be paid; yet from the fate,

Th' untimely fate of this devoted virgin,

What hope shall Greece derive of happier days?

Cassandra will survive.

# ULYSSES.

To practise aught

Against her life were madness, and our zeal

Would thence be construed into private malice.

The vulgar would applaud their own discernment,

And think it generous in them to defend

Their prince from the low arts of envy: so

Would our solicitude for what concerns

The good of common Greece be term'd. "Tis therefore
The gods, th' immortal Gods, to Greece propitious,

Dispense their omens, and prescribe our course.

The king, whose soul with absolute dominion

Cassandra rules, whate'er the general voice Decree, will never sacrifice her sister. 'Twill then be plain, that all his smooth pretences, Portentous dreams, and prodigies from heaven, Which to this hated shore so long have bound us, Were mere devices to abuse our faith, And sooth his Phrygian strumpet into kindness, His haughty spirit must at length submit: If not, he dreams in vain, th' incensed people Will brook him longer; Greece has other leaders. And while our joyful eyes behold once more Those plains which gave us birth, our arms with rapture Clasp our long widow'd wives, our blooming children, Here amid mould'ring ruins, fields dispeopled, Here let him wander with Cassandra, lonely, Abandon'd, ev'n by her he loves despis'd.

CALCHAS.

ULYSSES.

Oh may he wake to honour, and to virtue; And by the noblest conquest, o'er himself, Add lustre to the fame of Troy's destroyer!

Prophetic be that wish; for trust me, Calchas, I know, and I esteem his generous nature.

Dear to Ulysses' soul is Agamemnon,

But dearer is his country; and if, lost

To Greece, the king now lives but for Cassandra;
If, urg'd by frenzy without bounds, he meditates

To bid wide-ruin'd Troy again aspire,
And curse with wars renew'd the groaning world;
He is my foe, the foe of Greece and virtue;
And though my friendship bleed, the patriot shall
The base betrayer of the public trust

Pursue ev'n to the death.

CALCHAS.

Such dire necessity

May the just gods avert!

ULYSSES.

Believe me, Calchas,

'Tis some prophetic spirit fires my breast,
And tells me that they will. Our country's welfare,
Her honour is at stake. Our prudent counsels
Alone can ward the blow. I will convene
Th' assembly of the Greeks. Let no vain fears,
No womanish remorse invade thy breast.
Heaven points the way. Our country calls us on,
And the great motive justifies the deed.

# SCENE II.

# CALCHAS ALONE.

Mysterious are the ways of providence,
Above the feeble ken of human sight.
The secret springs unknown, man sees, surpriz'd,
Fair order from confusion grow, and good
From seeming ill. Polyxena must die.
The blood of innocence must stain the altar,
And the poor mother weep her murther'd child.
Yet shall this be the source of bliss to thousands
Who now in exile languish. Nations hence
Shall date their safety, and behold the spark
Which might again light up the flames of war
Extinguish'd here for ever.

# SCENE III.

CALCHAS, AGAMEMNON.

# AGAMEMNON.

Calchas, I sought thee. Tell me, reverend prophet, (Since heav'n has grac'd thy age with matchless wisdom) Whence is it that those Greeks, whom love and awe Long taught to bow to my superior sway, Now dare to murmur, and dispute my will?

Ungrateful men! is Aulis then forgot?

Oh Iphigenia, was thy innocent blood

Shed for a thankless race? Hard fate of princes,
Condemn'd to care and toil for others' good,
Yet envied, hated, fear'd, betray'd by all,
Malice their slightest failings swells to crimes,
And blots the memory of their public virtues.

### CALCHAS.

Believe me, royal Sir, the prince who makes His rule of government his people's welfare, May mock the feeble rage of sick'ning envy, Not hated, not distrusted, not betray'd; But prais'd, admir'd, obey'd, and lov'd by all.

#### AGAMEMNON.

'Tis well. It was not then the public welfare
That made my agonizing heart submit
To sacrifice my daughter. I resign'd
The blooming beauties of my lov'd Chryseïs
From any motive but the public good.
'Twas fear, perchance, and not my care for Greece
That bad me sooth Pelides' insolence,
And lose the memory of my private wrongs.

#### CALCHAS.

Oh Agamemnon, Greece respects thy virtues,

And owns with grateful love her benefactor:
But now, when ev'ry breast is beating high
With hope, to view their native plains once more,
What wonder, if their passions swell to tempest,
And spurn at that authority, which still,
Without a cause, delays their wish'd departure.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Without a cause! Art thou too leagu'd against me?

Does it become thy white and reverend age

To join in factious broils, and civil tumults?

Is then the state of sovereign power compell'd,

Whene'er the frantic multitude demand it,

T' unveil the secret motives of his conduct

To vulgar eyes? 'Twere fitter far for thee,

The minister of heav'n, to teach obedience

Than bold rebellion 'gainst thy sovereign's power.

#### CALCHAS.

Respect, oh king, that heaven which speaks by me! The gods will point their vengeance at thy head, If longer by Cassandra's love seduc'd.

## AGAMEMNON.

Prophet of ill! hence, to the fools who trust thee.

Thy lying oracles are void of terror

To Agamemnon's soul. I came to seek thee

To bid thee bend the fierce capricious people
To second my desires; and mark me, Calchas,
Upon thy life I charge thee, thou presume not
To thwart my purpose. By the gods I swear,
Th' immortal gods, whose delegate I am,
Thy disobedience shall be paid with death.
Go; be the victims slain, prepare thy omens,
Those specious tricks that cheat the gaping crowd,
And tell the Greeks that fate has fix'd them here.
The fair Cassandra hither bends her steps.
Begone; and henceforth better learn thy duty,
Lest injur'd majesty not always spare thee.

# SCENE IV.

AGAMEMNON, CASSANDRA.

# AGAMEMNON.

Oh royal maid, still must the cloud of sorrow
Hang on thy brow, and bathe thy cheek with tears?
Raise thy bright eyes, and bid these ruin'd plains,
These plains that mourn with thee, once more look gay.

### CASSANDRA.

Oh, Agamemnon, can a generous mind Insult the feelings of a wretch like me? Have I not seen the fatal day of Troy? Troy, built by hands divine, the nurse of heroes;
Her temples sink in flames, her matrons violated,
Her helpless infants dash'd against the ground;
My friends, my brothers, my disastrous father,
Victims of ruthless war; myself a captive—

# AGAMEMNON.

Oh spare so harsh a word, unjust Cassandra; We are not fierce barbarians, to wage war With your defenceless sex. We can respect Your virtues, and lament for your misfortunes. And let Cassandra's self bear witness for me, That ever since the destiny of war Gave thee to my protection, I have labour'd By every art which fondest love could dictate, To sooth thy troubled soul, and calm thy fears.

### CASSANDRA.

I feel, and own thy goodness, Agamemnon;
Yet can I never, never taste of comfort,
While o'er my fallen country ruin sits
Brooding, and withers every springing joy.
Here, 'mid the tombs of my departed kindred,
(Which each revolving year that sun shall see
Unhonour'd, unadorn'd, with flow'rs or victims)
Shall midnight wolves howl o'er the dreary waste.

And shall I, wretch, meanwhile in Argos, Argos, Whose glory rises on my conquer'd country, Unmindful of the love I bore them, yield My soul to pleasure, and unhallow'd bliss? Oh, I were lost indeed to virtuous shame, Could but so mean a thought find entrance here.

AGAMEMNON.

Alas! thy unavailing grief, Cassandra,
Wakes not the ashes of the dead to life;
They sleep for ever in the silent grave.
Thee better fates attend; for thee, Cassandra,
In long succession blissful days arise.

CASSANDRA.

Alas! Cassandra's portion is despair.

AGAMEMNON.

Far from thy breast such gloomy thoughts be driv'n, And open all thy soul to love and joy.

CASSANDRA.

Whom dost thou bid me love? Oh horror, horror!

No vulgar suitor wooes thee; but a king, Whom kings themselves obey.

CASSANDRA.

Oh royal Priam,

Where is thy empire now?

AGAMEMNON.

If what remains

Of Priam's royal house can claim thy care,
My suit shall not be vain. In me behold
A friend, as pow'rful as sincere, whose arm
Shall with a brother's love protect Polyxena,
And sooth the woes of aged Hecuba.
Oh then at length relent, be kind, and happy;
And in Mycenæ lose the thoughts of Troy.

CASSANDRA.

Alas! can I find pleasure in Mycenæ,
While Troy lies one wide heap of hopeless ruin?
Oh Ilium, oh my country! never, never
Shall my complaints have end; for thou art fall'n,
Alas! to rise no more.

AGAMEMNON.

Restrain, Cassandra,

Restrain these fond complaints.

CASSANDRA.

Oh Agamemnon,

If generous pity melt thee, if indeed Cassandra's happiness be dear to thee; Oh, do not drag me to that hateful land, Where every eye will look with scorn upon me.
The very pomp and splendour of Mycenæ
Will but upbraid me with my country's misery.
Have pity on my mother's feeble age;
Have pity on the youth of poor Polyxena;
Have pity, oh have pity on Cassandra!

AGAMEMNON.

Where tends thy frantic sorrow? Well thou know'st My fondest wish has been to see thee blest.

CASSANDRA.

Here, on this parent earth, where first the sun
Beam'd on our infant years, where once, each morn,
Joyful we welcom'd his returning light
That wak'd us but to bliss, till that dark hour
When Helen's crimes doom'd us to deep destruction;
Here, in the sad society of sorrow
Conjoin'd, here let us live, here mourn till death;
So when the Fates suppress the breath of Hecuba,
Our pious hands may the last rites perform.
'Twas here great Priam fell, and noble Hector;
The wife may mix her ashes with her husband's,
The mother with her children; and when I,
With sad Polyxena, worn out with grief,
Shall die, we too may sleep with our forefathers.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Alas! Cassandra, wilt thou never cease

To urge a fruitless pray'r? Thou know'st that Greece
Has sworn the utter ruin of thy country.
Here must eternal desolation frown.
In vain should I oppose the general voice.
Scarce could I rescue from their jealous fury
The sad remains of thy disastrous house.
Ev'n thee their barbarous policy had doom'd,
Thee, a weak helpless woman, to destruction;
And canst thou vainly hope the Greeks will suffer
The seed of Ilium's monarchs here to languish,
Gather the scatter'd sons of perish'd Troy,
And, brooding o'er your wrongs, cherish the seeds
Of future wars, and vengeance for the past?

CASSANDRA.

To this devoted shore my soul is fix'd.

On me, on me, let Greece exhaust her rage;

Here will I perish, I defy their malice;

For death is mercy to the greatly wretched,

AGAMEMNON.

Yet hear thy lover, and thy friend-

Away!

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You love me not.

AGAMEMNON.

Ungenerous, and unjust!

Wound not my ear with thy ill-tim'd reproaches:

Thou art the author of the woes I suffer.

Thy love is hateful to me. Those fell hands

Stain'd with my kindred's blood. Thy heart is pitiless,

Unfit to rule; to the poor slaves that fear thee

Harsh and imperious—

## AGAMEMNON.

At length by thy obdurate folly,
My anger shall consign thee to destruction.
Awhile possess thy leisure, and reflect
On what thou art, and what is Agamemnon.

# SCENE V.

CASSANDRA, TROJAN CAPTIVES.

#### TROJAN CAPTIVE.

Alas! what hast thou done? thou hast incens'd Him from whose pow'r alone we drew protection. Ah! thou hast pull'd on our devoted heads Untimely ruin. Ere 'tis yet too late,

Fly, princess, fly, sooth the offended monarch,

And deprecate his formidable wrath,

# CASSANDRA.

My friends, ye sad companions of my bondage,
Dismiss your fears; if Agamemnon frown,
He frowns on me alone. I have already
Drank deeply of the bitter cup of sorrow;
Nor can inventive cruelty inflict
Beyond what I have suffer'd: I have therefore
Courted his wrath, and sought for welcome death,
Alas! in vain. I must be wretched still.

# CAPTIVE, - de les les

Farewell then all our hopes. This desperate frenzy Will in one common fate involve us all.

# CASSANDRA,

A moment yet, a moment's space is given,
And you will wish that rapid dissolution
Had swept you from the chearful light of heav'n,
Nor left partakers of the woes to come.
I see the gathering storm. O house of Priam!
Oh daughters of fall'n Troy! it comes, it comes
Big with new ills, and urg'd along by fate.
Thrice happy whom the silent grave contains,

But we—What gloomy visions round me rise,
What horrors swarm! we are not with the happy.

CAPTIVE.

Fear shoots through all my veins. Immortal pow'rs!

To what are we reserv'd?

CASSANDRA.

Inquire not, virgins,

Th' inexorable gods will soon declare,

Too soon their dreadful purpose. Seek we now

That mournful mansion, vocal still to strains

Of grief, the ceaseless moan of Hecuba:

Bow'd down with age, and doubly bow'd with misery,

How shall her feeble frame support the blow!

# ACT II. SCENE I.

HECUBA, CASSANDRA, CAPTIVES.

#### HECUBA.

Support me, oh my daughters!, bear me forward, That yet once more these aged eyes may rest Upon the poor remains of ruin'd Troy. Oh plains, in vain belov'd! oh scenes of joys! But joys that soon retiring left their place To nameless woes, and horrors without end. Where now the swelling grain, the clust'ring vines, That once in full profusion flourish'd round? Where the gay splendor of your tow'ry cities, Whose populous streets were like the swarming hive? Where are the sacred temples of your gods? All lost in one promiscuous ruin: all Ravag'd, deform'd, profan'd, and desolate. Thee too, my daughter-Oh my hapless children! Not for myself I mourn; my few sad days Had soon been pass'd away, and wasting misery Had wrought its own relief. But you-that thought Indeed is full of anguish—When, alas, Shall end your sorrows, oh my hapless children!

#### CASSANDRA.

Oh author of my life, the only blessing,
The sole support and comfort we have left!
Weep not for us. Th' immortal gods we worship
Will guard their fav'rite Innocence from wrong.
Short is the triumph of the proud and impious,
And from the feeble ken of mortal sight,
Th' irrevocable laws of fate conceal'd.
To-morrow's sun may shine on our deliverance.

#### HECUBA

Oh daughter, what have we to do with hope?

The gods have pour'd their curses on our heads.

Alas, have we deserv'd them? We have never

Despis'd their temples, and their righteous laws;

We have no hospitable rites profan'd,

No holy nuptial couch defil'd with guilt.

Let then the nations of the world behold us

Guiltless, yet groaning with unequall'd anguish,

While shameless Helen (can my patience bear it?)

Deform'd with crimes, though sprung from race divine,

Shares ev'ry bliss—then say, the gods are just.

#### CASSANDRA.

Oh pardon, madam, my presumptuous tongue, That dares reprove the parent I revere.

Shall we arraign the justice of the gods,
And with licentious and reproachful speech
Profane the awful majesty of heav'n?
Shall we, poor reptiles as we are, resist
Omnipotence, and murmur at his will?
The gods, with steady and impartial hand,
Distribute good and evil to mankind.
There was a time, when on thy favour'd head
They shower'd their choicest blessings. Oh my mother,
Be thankful for the past, and let thy patience
Disarm the wrathful pow'rs that now pursue thee.

#### HECUBA.

There was a time, indeed, when Hecuba
Was number'd with the happy. Might those hours
Return once more! Then peace and wealth were mine,
And the wide realm of Phrygia hail'd me queen.
Alas! what am I now? I then was mother
Of many children; many sons I had,
Prudent in council, matchless in the field.
One only—oh the horrid scenes that crowd
Upon my memory!—
One only spurn'd th' inviolable laws
Of hospitable Jove. Curst be the hour
When first my womb teem'd with th' abhorred fruit!

Oh doubly curst the hour, when I despis'd

The warning of the gods, and gave him life!

For this the vengeful furies now pursue me;

For this my murder'd husband haunts my slumbers;

My Hector too—Distraction!—Oh Cassandra!

I laid your native Troy in ashes; J.

Let loose the bloody dogs of war, to prey

Upon my slaughter'd children; gave you all

To sorrow, death, dishonour; Nemesis,

Exhaust your wrath on me!

#### CASSANDRA.

Some god assist her!

What wildness in her looks! Her colour flies;
Her heaving breast beats quick. Not long can nature
Support such strong emotions; yet even now
My boding bosom throbs with ills to come,
And shapes of horror swim before my sight.

#### CAPTIVE.

Lo! where with haggard eye, and trembling step, One of our captive brethren hither moves.

#### CASSANDRA.

Through the wide camp the sound of tumult rings, And clanging arms and threat'ning shouts arise.

# SCENE II.

ENTER THE SECOND CAPTIVE.

What is thy message? That 'tis full of terror Too well thy looks declare.

SECOND CAPTIVE.

Oh will the woes

Of our disastrous country know no end?

When will remorseless Juno cease from vengeance?

Say whither tend thy words? Greece has already Robb'd us of all that mortals prize on earth,
All that could lighten life. Has then her council Doom'd me to death? It is a welcome sentence.

SECOND CAPTIVE.

Oh most unhappy mother!

HECUBA.

Ha, what say'st thou?

Are then my children threaten'd? speak.

SECOND CAPTIVE.

I dare not.

HECUBA.

'Tis then too plain.

#### CASSANDRA.

Speak, I conjure thee, Trojan, And free us from the anguish of suspense.

SECOND CAPTIVE.

Know then the worst. Th' assembly of the Greeks Was met; the princes in due order plac'd; When lo, with artful and insidious speech Troy's bitterest foe, the dark Ulysses, rose, And bad the seer for prophecy renown'd, The reverend Calchas, speak the hidden cause, What God incens'd for sacrifice withheld So long to their desiring sight denies The joyful prospect of their native land. He said; and straight, with well-dissembled fear, Uprose the priest, and "Swear, ye chiefs," he cried, "That whatsoe'er the oracles of heaven My tongue must now disclose, I shall be safe From violence." Th' assembled princes swore. The prophet then, "The mighty son of Peleus Demands his promis'd bride, the fair Polyxena. Once your ingratitude you mourn'd in blood; Tempt not the vengeance of the gods again, But deprecate the hero's angry shade."

Loud plaudits rose around. Cold horror crept
Through all my veins. Trembling I left the place,
And hasted hither with the mournful tidings.

CASSANDRA.

She falls!—Support her, virgins—nature sinks
Oppress'd beneath accumulated woe.
So—gently raise her. The fresh-breathing gale
May rouse her torpid senses. See, she wakes;
Her languid eyes she raises; but till night,
Eternal night shall cover their dim orbs,
Peace shall not sooth her anguish.

HECUBA.

My Cassandra!

Yet do I live. Give me thy hand, my daughter. Support me.

CASSANDRA.

Filial love shall still attend thee.

HECUBA.

Again do I behold thy light, oh sun.

It was a fearful dream. They came, methought,

To drag Polyxena from my embrace.

CASSANDRA.

Perhaps this Trojan did not hear aright.

#### HECUBA.

Alas, it was no dream. Thy rays are cheerful,
Oh sun! but not to me. To me thou bring'st
Woe only—Misery still heaped on misery!
Oh gods—But are there gods to look with pity
On any Trojan? upon Priam's wife?
And Hector's mother? No, my child must die,
My last, my best belov'd. For this our lords
Reserv'd me. This was then their boasted mercy!
They twisted hope again about my heart
Only to tear it thence with keener anguish.
Oh bitter is the cup the Captive drains;
But far more bitter is the pang which parts
The hoary mother from her dying child.

#### CASSANDRA.

Despair not yet. Our piety shall sooth Thy grief, and calm thy fears.

#### HECUBA.

Ha! what are you,

My friends?—You weep—oh rather join to curse me.

I am the fatal author of your sufferings;

I bore the brand which has consum'd us all!

The wrath of heav'n pursues my steps; I am

The mother of that wretch, whose hot desire

Nor plighted faith, nor hospitable rites

Restrain'd. I snatch'd thee, oh my son, from death,

Though warn'd by the dread voices of the gods,

And now I justly suffer.

## CASSANDRA.

Oh my mother,
Banish these black reflections, which but add
To griefs too fierce already. Thou art free
From guilt; and those to whose proud crimes success
Has lent a transient splendour that deceives
The dazzled multitude, can never know
So sweet a thought, a transport so sincere.

#### HECUBA.

Is comfort then for me? Oh grief! oh anguish!
Grief, without hope! Anguish unutterable!
Where are my noble sons? Where is my husband?
Where is my country? Who will plead for me?
Who will defend me? Oh, my darling child,
For thee the nuptial torch shall never burn;
Death is thy portion, misery is mine.

#### CASSANDRA.

Are there not gods above us?

#### HECUBA.

Vain, vain hope.

We are abandon'd by the gods, and Fate,
Whom even gods obey, has seal'd our doom.
Come then, my daughters, lead me, lead me on,
That I may seek th' inexorable kings,
And, groveling in the dust, implore their pity.
This one sad boon, at least, the gods may grant;
This fatal mercy ev'n my foes bestow;
That first these veins may bleed; that these old eyes
May ne'er behold the murder of my child.
Oh my Polyxena! my dear Polyxena!
How gladly should I close my eyes in death,
Might but my life suffice to glut their fury;
Might I but add one hour to thine, Polyxena!

## SCENE III.

## ENTER POLYXENA.

## POLYXENA.

The voice of lamentation reach'd my ear;

And as I nearer drew, in mournful guise

My mother's fault'ring tongue pronounc'd Polyxena,

What new alarm?—My mother!—mute distress

O'erwhelms her. Speak, Cassandra, I conjure thee, What evils threat the fountain of my life. Oh, free my soul from fear.

My child, my child!

CASSANDRA.

Oh my unhappy sister!

POLYXENA.

With your tears

Alone you answer me. What should this mean? What is this dreadful sentence which the tongue Wants power to utter?

CASSANDRA.

Oh, Polyxena!

How shall my lips disclose the tale of horror?
What crimes are thine, on thy devoted head
To draw so harsh a doom?

## POLYXENA.

Your sorrows then

Are shed for me? What, have the Greeks again Prepar'd accursed rites, whence the just gods, Wrathful, avert their eyes; where Hymen frowns; And dost thou think so poorly of Polyxena, That she will stoop to own an Argive husband,

His hands yet reeking with her kindred blood?

No, my Cassandra, I have Hector's soul;

Dishonour ne'er can reach me. Unappall'd

I can meet death. Peace dwells within the tomb.

Alas, my daughter, thou wert all my comfort, And this sad hour must tear thee from my breast Never to be restor'd!

CASSANDRA.

The son of Peleus,

Ev'n in the grave insatiable of blood,

Demands, and Greece decrees, that thou shalt fall

A victim to his manes.

POLYXENA.

And is this

The dreadful doom? Witness, immortal powers!
That fearless, unrepining, I approach
The altar; to the sacrificer's knife
Fearless present my bosom. Yes, I go to visit
My long-lost friends; my father, brethren, all
The lov'd companions of my happier days.
Joyful I seek a refuge in the grave
From the rude mockery of insulting foes,
From brutal force, and from the sad reflection

Of what I once have been, and now I am.

#### HECUBA.

Oh agony!—my daughter!—Oh! I cannot,
I cannot bear this parting. Madness now
Were welcome to me. Heaven gave me sense
Only to feel misfortune.

### POLYXENA.

These complaints,

This frantic sorrow, tear my breast with pangs,
Which the pale king of terrors, though array'd
In tenfold horror, never could inflict.
Cease to lament: we part to meet again.
Here we are but companions in affliction.
The hours are counted by misfortunes. Death,
Foe to the many, is a friend to us.
Death shall unite us in eternal peace.

#### HECUBA.

Alas! thus blooming in the spring of life,

Is death for thee? When age—Ah me! those shouts—

CASSANDRA.

The swarming camp resounds with tumult. Hence, And learn the cause. The tread of thronging feet I hear. Confusion reigns around.

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#### HECUBA.

They come,

They come to tear her from me. Off, barbarians! Have you no mercy? Whither shall we fly—Are there no gods to hear?

## CASSANDRA.

Be patient, madam,

The gods will hear, and my prophetic soul
Ev'n now forebodes the joyful dawn of hope.
In vain our mortal and imperfect sight
Would pierce the gloom of dark futurity.
The past presents a chequer'd scene, of good
And ill, alternate; and the present moment
Limits our scanty knowledge. With the next,
Though now the tempest rage, and lour destruction,
The sun may dart his radiance through the clouds,
And universal nature smile again.

## FIRST CAPTIVE.

Princess, thy words are wise; and even now, Behold Lycaon hither bends his way; Impatience in his gait, and in his eye Joy smiling sits. We have not hop'd in vain.

## SCENE IV.

LYCAON ENTERS.

LYCAON.

Blest be the guardian pow'rs that yet protect
The poor remains of Troy!

HECUBA.

And is there hope?

Shall my child live?

LYCAON.

That child, my honour'd mistress, Is lov'd of Jove. Know then, that fierce contention Divides the Argive chiefs. Scarce had the doom, The dreadful doom, pass'd the fell lips of Calchas, When, fir'd with just disdain, the king of men Uprose, and, hurling on the ground his sceptre, Swore to protect your daughter, by the gods Whose attribute is justice.

HECUBA.

Have the wretched

Then found at length a friend?

LYCAON.

Hence fierce debate,

Rage in each heart, and fury in each eye, The louring princes part.

## POLYXENA.

Ye pow'rs supreme,

Whose mercy from a parent's eye has wip'd

The streaming tear, accept the daughter's praise!

## CASSANDRA.

Ye children of affliction, hear my words:

Heaven may protect, where the frail strength of man,
And human wisdom fail.

Approach we then, with meek and reverent awe,
Th' eternal thrones; and first, thou holy power,
High-rais'd above all gods, who cloth'd in light
Sitt'st ere the birth of time; greatest and best!
Whom, on the top of many-fountain'd Ide,
Oft have we prais'd with grateful sacrifice;
Oh hear us now!

#### POLYXENA.

Hear too, thou Delian queen,
Diana, graceful with thy silver bow!
Whom chaste and spotless purity of mind
Delights; if ever I have sought thy shrine,
If I have join'd thy white and virgin train,

Hear, goddess, hear!

HECUBA.

God of the fatal shafts,

Apollo, who in wrath from heaven descendest,
Dreadful as night, and through the tribes of men
Spread'st pestilence and death——

CASSANDRA.

Or more benign,

Father of light, cheer'd by whose golden beams All nature teems prolific; and o'er earth The circling seasons pour their copious store; Thou, once the guardian of ill-fated Troy, Who nine long years sustain'd her falling wall, Hear us, and save!

CAPTIVES.

Troy's great protector, hear!

Jove, Dian, Phœbus!

ALL.

Hear!

CASSANDRA.

For ye have power

To break the sceptre of the proud; to hurl 'Th' exulting victor vanquish'd to the ground; To raise the fall'n, and lay the mighty low.

We ask not empire, nor, what most allures
The wish of mortal man, delusive wealth;
We ask not for the vengeance of our wrongs.

## HECUBA.

We only ask for peace: that undisturb'd By new misfortunes, in the sad remembrance Of all that once was dear, now lost for ever, We may weep out the remnant of our lives.

## CASSANDRA.

Enough: and if th' irrevocable doom

Be past; if misery be our portion here;

Be this our comfort: —There must be, beyond

The narrow confines of this restless world,

Some place for suffering virtue; some blest soil,

Where the vext soul at length shall be at peace.

"The Fates for us prepare Elysian plains,

Where soft Etesian gales for ever blow,

And tranquil joys in long succession flow.

Those happy climes each ruder passion flies;

Nor envy rankles there, nor jars arise;

No tyrant's unrelenting frown is seen,

Nor sad captivity's dejected mien;

Ambition, avarice, lust, revenge, despair,
Ne'er rouse the blest inhabitants to war:
But heav'nly love, with softest influence, binds,
In flow'ry fetters, their congenial minds;
Entranc'd they hear, beneath the peaceful shades,
Th' alternate voices of th' Aonian maids;
Or rais'd to nobler thought, high converse hold
With heroes, and with heroines fam'd of old."

# ACT III. SCENE I.

AGAMEMNON ATTENDED, MENELAUS.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Oh greatness, to what risks art thou expos'd! How many cares and sorrows form thy train! How shall I act? What if I yield the victim? Love, pity, justice, honour, all forbid it. Shall I protect her? If I do, rebellion With daring hand strikes at my crown and life. This was the deep contrivance of Ulysses, That specious traitor, who, by fair pretence Of zeal for Greece, and simulated virtue, Cheats the deluded multitude, and leads them To aid his factious purpose.

### MENELAUS.

Yet this traitor
Has ventur'd bravely for us; hath forsaken
His native kingdom, his domestic joys,
His blooming offspring, and his tender wife,
To fight our battles, and revenge our wrongs.

AGAMEMNON.

Oh that the barren rocks of Ithaca,

His native kingdom, had contain'd him still! Those barren rocks, that tempest-beaten shore, This generous chief forsook, to share the spoils Of wealthy Troy, won by the hardy deeds, The toil, the wounds of others.

#### MENELAUS.

I have often

Prov'd his unshaken faith, his constant friendship; And much it moves my wonder, that distrust Should now attaint his honour. On what ground Stands thy suspicion?

#### AGAMEMNON.

Worthy Menelaus,

Thy generous temper, and mistaken gratitude,
Regard Ulysses with a partial eye.
But time will soon reveal this smooth dissembler
In native colours. My exalted station
He views with envy, and his dark designs
To its foundation shake thy brother's throne.
Ev'n now, by his pernicious artifice,
Rous'd into fury, through th' extended camp,
With foul reproach, and mutinous complaint,
The soldiers wound our ear. Th' impetuous Pyrrhus
Collects his bold Thessalians, vainly deeming

To wrest the sceptre from our stronger grasp. We yet their hopes shall frustrate.

MENELAUS.

Rash, and headstrong,
Pyrrhus may court destruction; but Ulysses,
I pledge my life, is faithful.

AGAMEMNON.

Lo where comes

Achilles' furious son. Upon his brow Sits stern defiance. Insolent rebellion Flames in his eye.

## SCENE II.

PYRRHUS ENTERS.

AGAMEMNON.

When last we parted, Pyrrhus, Presumptuous thou didst brave our anger. Say, What is thy purpose now?

PYRRHUS.

And needs there words

To speak my purpose? Does no inward monitor

Inform thee, wherefore comes Achilles' son?
Achilles, whom in life thou most didst injure,
And now thy envy in the grave pursues.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Young man, I reverenc'd thy godlike sire;
And would to heav'n inexorable fate
Had spar'd the bulwark and the pride of Greece!
For though his fiery temper oft betray'd
His youth to error, yet returning reason
Would soon atone th' involuntary fault:
And he was blest with every manly virtue,
Brave, open, generous, friendly, and sincere.

## PYRRHUS.

And what avail'd him all these boasted virtues,
His generous, open, unsuspicious temper?
To trust the gratitude of Agamemnon;
That gratitude, which, when his sword had foil'd
The foes you fear'd, and conquer'd realms for you,
Disgrac'd your benefactor, basely robb'd him,
And foul reproach, and contumelious usage
Heap'd on the man, whose prowess made you great.

## AGAMEMNON.

Prince, this opprobrious language ill beseems A subject's mouth, or fits a king to hear.

## PYRRHUS.

A subject's mouth!-

#### AGAMEMNON.

Yes, haughty boy, a subject's.

I am thy sovereign here. The common choice
On me conferr'd supreme command; and thou,
Presumptuous as thou art, shalt learn obedience,
Or punishment o'ertake thee.

#### PYRRHUS.

Insolence!

Punishment!—But this arm—

#### AGAMEMNON.

Vain boaster, know

I scorn thy feeble menace. To thy tent,
And rate the slaves whose baseness feeds thy pride;
Nor till thy headstrong passion learn restraint
Intrude again into thy general's presence.

#### PYRRHUS.

Ha! dost thou brave me? Know then, Agamemnon, I came not hither, or to dread thy wrath,
Or beg a paltry boon. I came to vindicate
My right, the right of my departed sire;
To claim Polyxena, and tell thee, king,
This arm shall force her from thee.

#### AGAMEMNON.

No, prince, I will not stain my hard-earn'd laurels

By such a deed as this; I will not shed, In wantonness of cruelty, the blood Of helpless innocence, and whom the sword In war's promiscuous carnage spar'd, resign To the blind rage of ruthless superstition.

#### PYRRHUS.

Fine specious talker! In what flattering colours Hast thou drest up ingratitude and falsehood! My soul detests him as the gates of hell, Whose words belie the feelings of his heart. 'Tis then the voice of soft humanity, 'Tis justice, mercy, heav'n's best attribute, That pleads so strongly for Polyxena! Now, by the spirit of my sire, I blush, Ev'n for my foe, for thee. 'Twere nobler far With steady front t' avow thy real motive, Thy passion for Cassandra, than to add To guilt that vice of cowards, vile hypocrisy.

## AGAMEMNON.

Let cowards wage a noisy war with words; But Agamemnon on his sword relies, And the firm justice of th' immortal gods.

## PYRRHUS.

Justly dost thou reprove me ling'ring here.

I go, proud man, soon to return more dreadful.

Then shalt thou tremble, when my lifted arm

Shall hurl inevitable vengeance on thee;

Then shalt thou fear, and sue too late for mercy.

## SCENE III.

## AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, ATTENDANTS.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Hence, Menelaus, arm our numerous friends; Summon each chief that yet obeys our orders. We must repress the insolence of Pyrrhus, Or tamely yield our high authority.

## MENELAUS.

The warlike bands from Argos and Mycenæ,
And those who, from Eurotas' banks, beneath
My banner sought the war, are brave and faithful.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Those too of Salamis, whom Teucer leads;
They have not yet forgot the godlike Ajax,
Nor by what arts Ulysses overcame.
Ætolian Diomede; he, though the friend
Of that detested traitor, still obeys
His general's voice: Idomeneus, and Merion,
Menestheus, and the speed of Locrian Ajax;

And Philoctetes too; he yet remembers
Who left him helpless on the desert shore.
These on the plain before the royal tent
Assemble. Let thy care, meanwhile, Talthybius,
Array our valiant Argives: let Adrastus
Collect Mycenæ's warriors: Arcas, thou
Shalt with a chosen band attend our person.
Each to his charge: be bold, and vigilant.

## SCENE IV.

ULYSSES, CALCHAS.

#### CALCHAS.

Ulysses, we have urg'd this point too far.

The king is fix'd, immoveable as fate;

His pow'r too deeply rooted: in his strength
Secure, he mocks the fury of the storm.

#### ULYSSES.

No, Calchas, pow'rful as he is, the storm
Will shake, and, if it cannot bend, destroy.
The prince who rules over divided subjects,
Though wisdom guide his counsels, and his hand
Undaunted courage, totters in his throne.

#### CALCHAS.

Thus hope, with flattering dreams of fair success,

Deludes the wisest. No, the Greeks will never Throw off their vow'd obedience to the king. Didst thou not mark how the base coward rabble Stood at his frown abash'd, and shook with fear,

ULYSSES.

I mark'd them well. I saw the general plaudit,
That seal'd the sentence of Polyxena,
At once suppress'd; but no unmanly fear
Deform'd a Grecian face; in every eye
Lighten'd the fire of generous indignation,
And every heaving bosom swell'd with rage.
The most in secret murmur'd, yet there were
Who loudly spoke displeasure: chiefly Pyrrhus,
Who, with his father's crown, inherits all
His courage and his fierceness; like Achilles,
Impatient of control, impetuous, haughty,
Full of resentment, jealous of his honour.

CALCHAS.

I know him well; and hatred of the king, Whom he considers as the foe profest Of his dead father, rankles in his bosom.

ULYSSES.

His temper soon will kindle into flame.

The soldiers too, who have so oft beheld him

Sweep like a whirlwind o'er th' embattled plain, Equall'd by none but by his godlike sire,
Almost adore their hero. He will shake
The camp with tumult; while thy holy tongue
Shall thunder execrations upon him,
Who of due honours dares defraud the dead.
Oh Calchas, call that fatal day to mind,
When bridal garlands deck'd the sacred fane,
And faithless Troy receiv'd the pride of Greece
With deadly blandishment.

CALCHAS.

The sad remembrance

Brings tears into my eyes.

ULYSSES.

Oh, wretch accurst!

ULYSSES.

And while the hero gaz'd In silent transport on his beauteous bride,
And not a thought of war, or deeds of death,
Broke on his peaceful bosom, drew the bow,

And stain'd the altars of the gods with blood.

CALCHAS.

The deed of horror the just pow'rs beheld Offended, and to swift destruction doom'd Perfidious Troy.

## ULYSSES.

Then bending o'er the corse,
Assembled Greece bedew'd their arms with tears,
And with deep imprecations swore revenge;
Swore, that in dread atonement, hecatombs
Of Trojan slain should fall; Priam, and all
His faithless sons, and Troy their funeral pile.
Swore too, that whom he lov'd, the fair Polyxena,
Should be his lot alone.

CALCHAS.

It is most true.

ULYSSES.

Yet now, regardless of that holy tie,
Regardless of our honour, int'rest, gratitude,
Compassion, or some motive better guess'd
Than nam'd, leads Agamemnon to retain
His captive. But shall we become the sport
Of each unruly passion that invades
His breast? Shall we, because we lov'd his virtues,

Be panders to his vice? Forbid it, Pallas, Forbid it all the guardian pow'rs of Greece.

CALCHAS.

Not with less fervent zeal than thine, Ulysses, My heart is fir'd, to seek my country's welfare. But all my hopes are blasted. Great Achilles Is now an empty name. Their ancient quarrel, Source of so many ills to Greece, still lives In Agamemnon's memory—

#### ULYSSES.

Think'st thou, Calchas,
The tale, which even now could heave thy breast
With mighty passion, has been heard unmov'd
By the quick spirit of the fiery Pyrrhus?
Think'st thou the brave companions of Achilles,
Who shar'd his triumphs, and who lov'd his person,
Will aid the base resentment of the king?
Poorly defraud the manes of their hero,
That hero, second only to the gods,
To gratify the humour of a tyrant?
Know then, the gathering clouds announce the tempest;
Ev'n now the throne of Agamemnon shakes,
Ev'n now young Pyrrhus marshals them for fight.

CALCHAS.

But should the king prevail-

ULYSSES.

I grant he may;
With practis'd skill he leads his troops to battle;
Not so the chief oppos'd: but patient Wisdom
Turns to her own advantage each event,
And, with firm step her destin'd end pursuing,
Compels reluctant Fortune to befriend her.
Trust then to me. Our country's guardian goddess,
Pallas, will bless the counsels she inspires.
But lo! the king approaches. Rapt in thought
He seems, and frowns contract his angry brow.
Let us retire. Persuasion would in vain
Exert her voice. Resentment and suspicion
Possess his soul, and point his rage at us.

## SCENE V.

AGAMEMNON, AN OFFICER.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Th' impetuous Pyrrhus rushes on destruction.

His troops are weak in number, and his rashness

Unequal to command.

Go, Medon, to my brother; bid him hasten

Th' auxiliar bands, and with a wary eye
Observe Ulysses, yet with utmost caution,
Lest our suspicion to his piercing eye
May be too manifest, and, gath'ring thence
Alarm, he join the foe.—Oh mighty Jove,
By whom the scepter'd lords of human race
Have pow'r, propitious thunder on my side!
This vain attempt repell'd, at length Ulysses,
By whose seditious breath the flame is kindled,
Traitor alike to Pyrrhus and to me,
In his own artifice involv'd, may perish.

## SCENE VI.

AGAMEMNON, CASSANDRA.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Cassandra! bath'd in tears! How doubly fair,
With what resistless beauty she appears!
There is a charm in suff'ring innocence,
To make the coldest bosom glow with pity.
Oh lovely mourner, lovelier in thy tears,
If for Polyxena those streams are shed,
Dispel thy fears, and let those radiant eyes
Assume new lustre from fair hope and joy.

#### CASSANDRA.

Oh prince, while prostrate at thy feet I fall,

And groveling in the dust implore thy pity,

Think, whom thou see'st thus low, thus poor, thus friendless,

Was once the daughter of a king like thee. As many cities own'd my father's sway, As many brave allies his standard join'd.

#### AGAMEMNON.

I share in all thy griefs. Oh rise, fair princess!

Ah no; this abject posture best becomes
So lost a wretch as I am. Yet reflect
Upon the strange vicissitude of things;
How giddy Fortune, in her airy round,
Sports with the fates of empires and of kings:
Think on the many blessings which attend
Thy prosp'rous days, and pity those who have,
Alas! for ever lost them.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Heav'n be witness,

I pity thee, ev'n from my inmost soul.

CASSANDRA.

Think on the anguish which a parent suffers;

The pangs which tore thy bosom, when at Aulis—
AGAMEMNON.

Oh agony!

#### CASSANDRA.

Thy darling, Iphigenia,
The tender, blooming, guiltless Iphigenia,
Ev'n in thy sight, from a fond mother's arms
Seduc'd by the base arts of curst Ulysses,
Was dragg'd a trembling victim to the altar;
Ev'n in thy sight receiv'd in her fair bosom
The murd'rous knife; ev'n in thy sight expir'd.

## AGAMEMNON.

Oh, thou hast plung'd a thousand daggers here; Hast rous'd a thousand furies in my breast,
To drive all joy and peace from thence for ever.
But be appeas'd. I will protect Polyxena,
Though at the hazard of my crown and life.

## CASSANDRA.

Oh, generous Agamemnon! my full heart

Fain would pour out its flood of thanks before thee;
But, oh, what words can speak my gratitude?

Oh, 'tis a godlike task to sooth affliction,

To raise th' oppress'd, and heal the wounded mind.

On deeds like this the righteous gods look down Well-pleas'd; and, when th' uplifted thunderbolt, Provok'd by rapine, cruelty, and all The various crimes which stain man's guilty race, Hangs menacing destruction, deeds like this Arrest the arm of vengeance.

### AGAMEMNON.

Oh, Cassandra,

Where is the flinty heart, which woes like thine Would not subdue to pity? With the mourners I share their grief; for I have known affliction. But softer interests bend my soul to thee; I dote on thee to madness.—Nay, Cassandra, Why that dejected air? Why are those eyes Averted, and bedew'd with rising tears? Am I a tyrant, whose remorseless temper Has added horrors to captivity? Or have I been thy friend, whose care has toil'd To sooth thy woes, and make thy bondage light?

#### CASSANDRA.

Oh, sir, is this a time to talk of love,
When lamentation through our tents resounds,
And danger, ruin, death, are rushing on us?

#### AGAMEMNON.

Ungrateful maid! And dost thou think it nothing,
That I have drawn my sword in thy defence?
'Tis thou hast arm'd Achilles' son against me:
For thee my life, my crown, my fame, I hazard,
And when my patient love aspires to hope,
Ev'n that poor boon thy cruelty denies me.

## SCENE VII.

#### ENTER MENELAUS.

## MENELAUS.

Thy orders are obey'd; the troops await thee.

Th' impetuous Pyrrhus gathers all his bands,

Arrays them for the fight, and rushes on.

Scarce thrice the space through which a jav'lin flies,

Launch'd from a vigorous arm, divides our hosts.

## AGAMEMNON.

Too long we linger; let us fly to battle,

And Jove and Pallas thunder on our side! [Exeunt.

## SCENE VIII.

· CASSANDRA, CAPTIVES.

## FIRST CAPTIVE.

Wherefore, Cassandra, on thy bended brow

Does gloomy melancholy still reside,

When Fortune smiles at length, and the kind gods

Have rais'd a strong protector for Polyxena,

And sav'd her from impending fate?

#### CASSANDRA.

Alas!

My lov'd companions, your short gleam of joy Fain would I not disturb with dire forebodings. Black thoughts invade my fancy, and I dread I know not what. Peace must be still a stranger To my distracted breast.

## FIRST CAPTIVE.

The wise enjoy

The present blessing, nor anticipate Misfortunes, distant far.

## CASSANDRA.

My fears, perhaps,
Are groundless; but the mind familiar long

With sorrow, draws, from every trivial thing, Suspicion and alarm.

## CAPTIVE.

What should we fear?

The hot-brain'd Pyrrhus never can prevail
Against the pow'r and prudence of the king.
And does not Agamemnon's solemn promise
Engage him to protect thy sister's life?
Is not his generous temper prone to mercy,

Benevolent, and just?

#### CASSANDRA.

That he has virtues,

We, whom those virtues sav'd, perforce must own:
But, ah! how unavailing oft is virtue

To curb th' impetuous fury of our passions!

The passions too of princes, long disus'd

To salutary rigour of restraint,

Break forth with double rage. Hence spring my fears:

He loves me; and who knows what dire resolves

His suit rejected may at length inspire?

#### CAPTIVE.

Oh princess, might at length thy stubborn heart Bend to his prayer; or, if thy fixt resolve Disdains the rites of Hymen, smooth behaviour, A smile, a courteous word, might feed his hope, (A lover's faith is easily deceiv'd)

And lives, so dear to thee, secure from danger.

CASSANDRA.

Never. Cassandra's soul abhors the thought.

Nor would the virtuous dignity of Hecuba

Receive a life bought by her child's dishonour.

CAPTIVE.

Alas! while I lament the fatal prejudice That dooms us all to misery and to death, I must perforce admire thee.

CASSANDRA.

'Tis not death,

Or torture, which is dreadful; 'tis suspense.
The noble mind resigns itself to fate,
And stands unshaken in the tempest's rage.
But expectation of the coming ill
Is painful to the bravest. In the hour
When strong necessity has seiz'd his prey,
The worst is past already; we have felt
In thought the pangs, th' extreme of agony.
Oft in the lonely hours of contemplation,
My tortur'd fancy to my view presents
My sister bleeding at the altar's foot,

While Hecuba, dishonour'd in the dust,

Writhes with her pangs, and grasps my hand in death.

I live to envy their disastrous fate;

And, praying, weeping, raving, I am dragg'd

To Agamemnon's bed, till, sated, he

Consigns me o'er to some rude ruffian's lust.

Madness is in the thought—Oh save me, save me,

If yet a god will hear the lost Cassandra!

[Exeunt.

# ACT IV. SCENE I.

HECUBA, POLYXENA, CAPTIVES.

## HECUBA.

Thanks, gentle friends; alas! your tender care
I never can repay you. Once I was
Your queen; I am your fellow-captive now.
My favour once had made you happy; now
I am an useless burthen, and but add
To your afflictions, too severe already.

## FIRST CAPTIVE.

Oh my lov'd mistress, let not fruitless grief
O'ercast the dawn of hope that now salutes us.
The gods have spread their shelt'ring arms before us;
The mighty Agamemnon fights your battles;
And should success upon his arms attend,
What have we not to hope? Yes, I will cherish
The rapt'rous thought; we may again revisit
The dwellings of our youth, our household gods;
Ilium shall from her ashes spring, and Hecuba
Be once again a queen.

## HECUBA.

Alas! my friends,

The pomp of empire has no charms for me.—
Oh greatness! whom the crowd at distance view,
And gaze, enamour'd, on ideal beauties,
While those who grasp thee, find thee foul and loathsome,

Parent of sorrow, cares, and disappointment!—
No: would the clemency of Agamemnon
Give some sequester'd spot, some lone retreat,
Where I might pass what yet remains of life;
Where, with my dying eyes, I might behold
My children safe in calm obscurity,
Safe from the restless jealousy of Greece!
'Tis all I ask. With all his power, the king
Can give no more. My prayers for this alone
Ascend before the throne of righteous Jove.

# POLYXENA.

And we shall gain that calm retreat, my mother.

Wherefore should they deny so poor a boon?

We have not wrong'd the Greeks, though they have brought

So many ills on us. They cannot fear us;
They cannot, great and powerful as they are,

Behold, with eyes of terror, poor, weak women,
Whose friends have perish'd; who have none to help
them.

#### HECUBA.

Thy unexperienc'd youth, Polyxena,
Has yet to learn the savage ways of men.
By nature headstrong, cruel, fierce, relentless,
They know not pity, and delight in blood.
Necessity first made them stoop to law,
And practise virtues which they cannot feel;
But when on Fortune's wings they rise to pow'r,
Despotic, uncontrol'd, at once they burst
The bonds which held them, and their stormy passions
Exert their utmost rage, now wanton grown
By long restraint, and scatter ruin round them.

## POLYXENA.

Yet some are form'd of softer mould, and melt
At others' woe. Mov'd by Cassandra's pray'rs,
Mov'd by the story of a mother's anguish,
The king rejected the demands of Pyrrhus,
And with disinterested pity drew
His sword, in the defence of friendless innocence.

#### HECUBA.

Disinterested pity!-no, my daughter,

Say rather pride, which ill could brook that subjects
Should scrutinize his actions, and presume
To thwart his will. Ulysses' artifice
Rais'd up the phantom of the dead Achilles,
Enrag'd, that, lur'd by hope to win the love
Of my Cassandra, whose firm soul is fix'd
Here to remain, the king so long delay'd
Their wish'd departure——

# SCENE II.

ENTER A MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Conquering Agamemnon

Greets by my mouth the royal Hecuba.

Dismiss your fears; success has crown'd his arms,
And haughty Pyrihus mourns his glory fall'n.

Thy lov'd Polyxena is freed from danger,
And Greece no more disputes her monarch's will.

#### HECUBA.

Thanks to the gods! and, next to them, my thanks
Are due to Agamemnon. Tell the king
I have no words to speak my gratitude;
Yet shall the orphan, sav'd by him from death,
The widow, from whose eye his hand has wip'd

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The tear, implore the blessing of the gods Upon his favour'd head.

# SCENE III.

HECUBA, POLYXENA, CAPTIVES.

# HÉCUBA.

Awhile we breathe.

Thou shalt not yet be torn from these old arms; Still shall my fond, fond eyes behold my child. Oh, might this blissful hour for ever last! But darkness clouds the future.

My mind, accustom'd only to affliction, Still will forebode I know not what of evil, And fancy, kindling into madness, shapes

A thousand forms of terror, and forbids

To taste of happiness; yet, if the gods

Delight in innocence, thy filial piety,

Thy truth, thy spotless purity of soul

Will move their pity —Lo! with Menelaus

Ulysses moves this way, the foe profest

Of all our race; his sight is painful to me.

# POLYXENA.

Mark how intent their looks, their eager gestures. Their converse, sure, must be of high importance.

# HECUBA.

Let us retire, my daughter. Even now,
Perhaps, you wily traitor plots our ruin.
Oh frustrate all his schemes, all-gracious heav'n!
Doom him to swift perdition! let him feel
But half the woes which he has caus'd to me!

# SCENE IV.

MENELAUS, ULYSSES.

# ULYSSES.

Now, by the gods, the king has wrong'd me much. Is this the fruit of all my ten years toil? Thus are my faithful services repaid? Yet what have I not borne for Agamemnon? But 'tis forgotten all: and those whom gratitude Should link with me in friendship's strictest bonds, Are first to brand my fame with foul suspicion. Whom is it you suspect? It is Ulysses; He who has been most zealous in your cause. Whose prudence drew Achilles to your aid? Who slew the Thracian prince? Whose daring step Took through an hostile town his fearless way, And from the citadel, where thousands arm'd Kept watch, by Diomede alone assisted,

Bore off the tutelary pow'r of Troy?

Oh friend, thy words are painful to my heart. To own thy merit great, is only justice:
Greece with united voice aloud proclaims it,
And the wide world re-echoes with thy fame.
But I am bound to thee by every tie,
My friend, my benefactor. Thy sincere
And noble nature never was suspected
By Menelaus.

ULYSSES.

I believe it freely.

Thou art too good, too generous, and too just,

To stoop to such a meanness: but thy brother—

Oh Menelaus! his unkindness wounds me.

# MENELAUS.

I mourn his fault; and in its very birth
Had check'd it; but his fiery temper, once
Alarm'd, ill brooks restraint. Time will restore
His better judgment, and your prudent conduct
In the late mutiny, will clear his doubts.

#### ULYSSES.

Rash, inconsiderate man! whence sprung those doubts?

If from the purpos'd sacrifice his wrath

Arose, did I propose it? No, 'twas Calchas:
And if the gods demand the virgin's blood,
Am I to blame? Can I control the gods?
But say it was his purpose to detain
The fleet, and I oppos'd it. Is it therefore
That he complains? Ungenerous, and unjust!
Who first deceives his friends, and takes offence
That his dissimulation has escap'd them.
Still in the public camp would he complain
Of angry deities, whose portents dire
Bound us so long to this detested shore.
I thought he was sincere, and so didst thou,
So did united Greece. What wonder then
I acted as I did?

MENELAUS.

What shall I say?

Or how atone the fault of Agamemnon?

Ingratitude's the common lot of those

Whose services promote their prince's greatness.

Th' occasion past, they're thrown neglected by.

But I was bound by no allegiance to him:

A monarch as himself. I was his friend;

I lov'd him; and have therefore toil'd to serve him.

'Tis hence more deeply his injustice wounds me.

A friend's distrust pierces the feeling mind

With keenest anguish.

#### MENELAUS.

Believe me, my Ulysses,

You think on this too deeply. Agamemnon Ere now repents of his ill-plac'd suspicion.

#### ULYSSES.

I will rely upon thy friendship, prince,
To clear my injur'd honour; and I swear,
Wrong'd as I am, my firmest wish is still
Once more in mutual confidence and love
To join with Agamemnon. What is past
I blot for ever from my memory.

#### MENELAUS.

Soon at thy tent I'll meet thee, and report 'Th' event of my endeavours. Fare thee well.

# SCENE V.

#### MENELAUS.

And may the gods still favour and protect thee!
That thou art honest still, thy ready aid
In the late conflict lent, forbids to doubt.
And much I fear thy only crime has been,

That thou hast prest too far our wish'd departure:
Yet if to languish for our native shore
Be criminal, what Greek is free from guilt?—
Oh Agamemnon, I forebode, the passion,
Which with such fury now invades thy bosom,
Will tarnish all thy glory, shake thy pow'r,
And, whom united Greece with pride obey'd,
Sink to contempt and infamy.

# SCENE VI.

MENELAUS, AGAMEMNON.

# MENELAUS.

My brother!

Be this auspicious day for ever bless'd,
Which fixes thy authority. Too late
The baffled Pyrrhus mourns his rash attempt,

# AGAMEMNON.

Such be the fate of all, whose envy strikes

At my command, or pride disputes my will!

But, Menelaus, I observed thee rapt

In thought, and on thy careful brow

A gloom, ill suited to a day like this.

#### MENELAUS.

Pardon a brother's freedom, Agamemnon,

But thou hast wrong'd Ulysses with suspicion:
Some foe to both, some villain has traduc'd him;
Yet sure his conduct——

#### AGAMEMNON.

Just is thy reproof.

I mark'd his prompt obedience to my orders; He is no partner of the guilt of Pyrrhus.

# MENELAUS.

Of all the chiefs who join'd their arms with ours, Him have I valued most. His prudence oft Has turn'd the tide of fortune; has prevail'd When valour strove in vain.

#### AGAMEMNON.

It is most true:

Nor have I been forgetful of his service.

Go then, my friend, and tell him; from my soul I banish all suspicion. 'Twas a gust

Of sudden passion, which obscur'd my reason.

My mind, o'erburden'd with the cares of empire,

Judg'd not aright: I see my error now,

And freely thus confess it.

# MENELAUS.

This indeed

Is great, is noble, worthy Agamemnon.

Thus to acknowledge faults belongs alone

To those, whom heav'n above the race of mortals

Exalts, in every manly, generous virtue;

And amply for the injury compensates.

Ulysses will be fix'd more firmly your's.

# SCENE VII.

# AGAMEMNON.

Once more Ulysses has escap'd my vengeance;
But shall not long. His policy and caution
Have left no proof of guilt. Artful, and popular,
To practise aught against him now were dangerous,
And might inflame sedition. Yet I know
'Twas he that urg'd the furious Pyrrhus on.
But fraud I will oppose to fraud, and he
Shall share the punishment, who shar'd the crime.
Profound dissimulation shall conceal
My hatred, even from my brother's eye;
And when, to full security resign'd,
He deems no danger near, or art, or force
Release me from my foe.

# SCENE VIII. / AGAMEMNON, CASSANDRA.

# AGAMEMNON.

Cassandra here!

This meeting is most fortunate. My suit
May now be best enforc'd, while gratitude
Glows in her breast, and melts it to compliance.—
Hail, royal virgin! let me share the joy
That fills thy bosom, for a sister's safety.
And oh, forgive me, princess, if I own
I fought, I conquer'd but for you alone.
And when I led my squadrons to the field,
This thought gave weight and vigour to my arm,
That she, for whose dear sake I courted danger,
Might smile at length upon my faithful love.

# CASSANDRA.

Oh Agamemnon, if Cassandra's gratitude
Could give thee happiness, thou wert indeed
Beyond all utterance blest: but deeds like this
Are their own best reward. Succeeding times
Shall learn thy generous pity, and applaud.

# AGAMEMNON.

And yet, Cassandra, though renown be sweet,

Purchas'd by fair and honourable deeds,

To me it is of little worth, compar'd

With the bright object of my vast ambition;

Oh, my Cassandra, must I name thy love?

May I not plead a title to it now?

A sister from impending ruin rescu'd,

A mother from misfortune's worst extreme:

These are my merits, these to me thou ow'st;

Can these be dearly purchas'd by a smile?

CASSANDRA.

Oh, sir, you wrong yourself, thus to impute
To an unworthy passion for your captive
Your generous succour to the weak oppress'd.
No; Agamemnon acts from nobler motives;
Benevolence and pity warm his heart,
Which stoops not to the sway of vulgar passions.

AGAMEMNON.

Is this Cassandra's gratitude? This cold, Insulting mockery?

CASSANDRA.

Oh Agamemnon

AGAMEMNON.

You trifle with my fondness, Had I us'd

The rights which conquest gave me o'er my slave,

Had I compell'd thee to accept my love,
Custom had justify'd the deed. But I
Disdain'd th' unmanly violence: I used thee
As thou hadst been my queen, not as my captive:
Nor Clytemnestra's self is honour'd more.
You have abus'd my mercy. Shall my kindness
Be paid with scorn? No, my Cassandra, no,
You must consent to love me.

CASSANDRA.

Never.

AGAMEMNON.

Ha!

CASSANDRA.

I will not with false hopes delude thee, prince; I never will be thine,

AGAMEMNON.

Beware, rash woman!

Tempt not too far my anger.

CASSANDRA.

I am fix'd

As fate; nor pray'rs, nor threats have pow'r to move me.

'Tis well. But hope not I will tamely bear

Thy scorn. Proud woman! thou shalt feel me.

Hence from my breast for ever let me banish
The foolish passion that so late disgrac'd it.

Hate, keenest hate succeeds. I will prepare
New torments for thee. I will rack thy soul
With sharpest anguish! Thou shalt mourn in blood
Thy black ingratitude. I'll cast thee forth
To the loath'd arms of ev'ry brutal soldier,
The refuse of the camp.

#### CASSANDRA.

Death, the best friend
The wretched find, is still within my pow'r.—
My presence, sir, but moves your soul to fury;
Permit me to retire.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Begone: and know,

Ere night descends, Polyxena must die.

CASSANDRA, (kneeling.)

What have I heard? Oh, sir, recall those words!
On me, on me alone exhaust your vengeance:
I only have offended. Let me suffer!
What shall I say? Oh do not turn away.
I only ask for death; but spare Polyxena!
Have you no mercy? O respect your honour,

Which cruelty like this will stain for ever!

I have deserv'd to die; but poor Polyxena—
Oh spare, spare her! spare the wretched Hecuba,
Already sinking under years and sorrow!
Rob her not of the only comfort left her——

# AGAMEMNON.

Thou know'st the terms of pardon Thy compliance Ensures their safety, and thy happiness.

'Tis thy obdurate folly which condemns them,
And if they perish, 'tis by thee they perish.

CASSANDRA, (rising.)

Thou hast recall'd my senses. Have I stoop'd

To sue for mercy, groveling in the dust?

Mercy from whom? My country's mortal foe.

I disclaim

Th' ungraceful weakness. It is past, and now I am myself again. To that abode
Of lamentation, where disastrous Hecuba
Broods o'er the memory of her wrongs, I go
To bear thy sentence. We will meet our fate
As suits the wife and daughters of a king.

# SCENE IX.

AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES AT A DISTANCE.

AGAMEMNON, (not seeing Ulysses.)

Presumptuous and obdurate as thou art,

Hence; but ere long my vengeance shall o'ertake thee.—

Curse on the meanness of my coward soul,

That truckled to my slave! But she has rous'd me.

Oh, fool! to risk my throne, my fame, and life,

For this ungrateful woman. How I blush

At memory of my weakness!

# ULYSSES.

You are ruffled.

What, has some new sedition shook your peace?

AGAMEMNON.

Ulysses, fly this instant; bid the priests

Prepare for sacrifice. I will no longer

Defraud the mighty dead of their due honour.

Unmoor the fleet, and to the fav'ring gale

Spread every canvas. Through the camp proclaim

Instant we steer for Greece. I grieve I check'd

Your just desires. I am determin'd now.

Polyxena shall die.

ULYSSES.

This sudden change—

AGAMEMNON.

Ask not the cause. Polyxena shall die.

Pelides' injur'd ghost demands her. Greece

Requires her blood, and Greece shall be obey'd.

ULYSSES.

Oh, sir, consider well what 'tis you do.
Should you desert Polyxena's defence,
Cassandra's love——

AGAMEMNON.

Cassandra! Furies seize her.

Name her no more, I sicken at the sound.

Alas! Ulysses, 'twas my love for her,

That poison to my fame, that held me here
In ignominious bondage: love of her

First led me to withhold the victim destin'd,

By Greece united, to Achilles' tomb.

ULYSSES.

I must obey your will, yet heav'n is witness With what extreme reluctance—

AGAMEMNON.

If thou lov'st ma

Thou wilt no longer tarry. Hence, I charge thee,
See that my will's perform'd: ev'n in the sight
Of curst Cassandra, let her sister die. [Exit Ulysses.
Hence, I for ever banish from my breast
That bane of all our peace and virtue, love;
And in his stead, from the dark realms of night,
Those realms of lamentation and affright,
In all the horrors of your snaky hair,
Ye furies, rise! Grief, terror, rage, despair!
The pow'rs of hell in my assistance join,
And all the transports of revenge be mine!

# ACT V. SCENE I.

# TROJAN CAPTIVES.

# FIRST CAPTIVE.

This way the pomp must pass. Here let us stand To take our last farewell; to gaze once more Upon that dying sweetness.

# SECOND CAPTIVE.

To behold

That lovely flower, which our fost'ring care With such attention rear'd, untimely blasted.

# FIRST CAPTIVE.

Ah, fruitless care! ah, unavailing beauty!

Those eyes that beam with ev'ry gentle virtue,

The iron hand of death must close for ever.

# THIRD CAPTIVE.

Th' unsullied whiteness of her polish'd neck, Where with the loves the sister graces play'd, Soon shall the murd'rous knife deform with gore.

# SECOND CAPTIVE.

A livid paleness shall usurp the place

Of health's new-budded roses in her cheek.

Those lips, from which so musically soft
The graceful accents fell, no more shall open,
To shed their fragrance round.

THIRD CAPTIVE.

Oh, best-lov'd maid!

Thou dear companion of my youthful hours,
And art thou lost for ever? Then, for ever
Will I lament thee. To my mournful heart
No comfort e'er shall come.

FIRST CAPTIVE.

Our lot is hopeless.

Oh, could our tears recall the fatal sentence!

But what are tears, or pray'rs, or spotless virtue?

They cannot bend Ulysses to compassion;

They cannot save whom wrathful heaven forsakes.—

Say, friend, where didst thou leave the wretched Hecuba?

How did she bear this last, worst stroke of fate?

SECOND CAPTIVE,

Roll'd in the dust, with frantic grief, she tore Her hoary hair, she smote her aged breast, And heap'd the glowing embers on her head; And oft with accent wild, and earnest gesture, Seem'd to hold converse with her absent child. Then tax'd the justice of the gods, and curs'd The hour which gave her birth. At length exhausted, Within in speechless agony she lies.

FIRST CAPTIVE.

Where does the sun, in his diurnal course,
Survey such misery? Unhappy woman!
Doom'd to drag on a wretched load of life
In worse than mortal agony. In death
We touch the goal, the period of our woes;
But to thy view each slow succeeding hour
Brings but a sad variety of woe.—
Lo! where Cassandra comes. Her lofty soul
Disdains to bend beneath the weight of grief,
And with a manly fortitude surveys
The evils which surround her.

# SCENE II. CASSANDRA, CAPTIVES.

CASSANDRA.

We are met,

My lov'd companions, on a mournful business.

How painful 'tis to part from those we love!

And yet we will not gratify our tyrants

With fruitless lamentation. Let us rather,

Fall'n as we are, instruct their pride, how much

We still can soar above them. No misfortune Can bow the firmness of a virtuous mind.

FIRST CAPTIVE.

Thy soul assumes new vigour from affliction.

Thy courage grows with danger; but not all

Are with such constancy endu'd. Say, princess,

How fares it with the lost Polyxena?

Does not her meek and gentle temper shrink

At the near view of death?

CASSANDRA.

Not so, my friends;

The sister of Cassandra bears a spirit

Superior to her fate. When first Ulysses

Announc'd her sentence, with unmoisten'd eye

She stood, as if regardless of herself:

But when in frantic grief despairing Hecuba

Pour'd forth her wild laments, and curs'd her being,

Such was her filial virtue, with such sweetness

She strove to sooth her parent's strong affliction,

That ev'n Ulysses soften'd at the sight.

FIRST CAPTIVE.

Oh, that inexorable fate should doom Such excellence to an untimely grave!

# CASSANDRA.

That excellence had been unknown, if fortune
Had plac'd her in the beams of smooth prosperity.
Adversity calls forth each latent virtue,
And shews the noble soul in all its lustre.
Polyxena shall gain immortal fame;
Late time shall hear, and even foes applaud.
Oh! 'tis a sweet reflection, in the hour
Of pain and sorrow, though our mortal bodies
Are here expos'd to ev'ry wound and insult
Cruelty can devise, and force inflict,
Yet there is that which mocks their utmost efforts,
That which the base and feeble may resign,
But which no pow'r on earth can ravish from us;
The freedom of the mind, our fame, our virtue.

# FIRST CAPTIVE.

Oh could thy tongue, by sentiments like these, Teach the sad Hecuba to bear with patience Th' inevitable destiny of heav'n!

# CASSANDRA.

Alas! my friends, there only I am wretched: My anxious heart bleeds at her ev'ry pang. When life is ebbing fast, exhausted nature, Of half her vigour robb'd, sinks with her burthen. The mind too, by the jey hand of age
Opprest, in vain strives to exert her pow'rs.
But to what heav'n ordains, we must submit.
We cannot change th' eternal laws of fate.
The portion of misfortune they allot
To each, nor strength, nor art, nor prudence,
Nor even virtue, can avail to shun.—
But lo! where moves in sullen pomp along
The slow procession. Lo! the spotless victim,
Pure as th' unsullied chastity of heav'n.

FIRST CAPTIVE.

Flow, flow, my tears! Oh, such a sight as this Would melt the coldest heart!

SECOND, CAPTIVE.

Oh day of horror!

That brings the fulness of our misery!

CASSANDRA.

Restrain, restrain your grief. As fierce a pang
Harrows my breast, as that which now you feel;
Yet will I not, with most untimely sorrow,
Add to the horrors which surround my sister.
I will not wound her soul, now wing'd for flight,

With the sad prospect of her friends' despair.
'Tis ours her drooping spirits to sustain,
And guard her from the pangs of keen regret.

# SCENE III.

CASSANDRA, CAP'IVES.

(A procession of priests, &c. leading Polyxena to sacrifice, soldiers following. They advance towards the front of the stage.)

# POLYXENA.

Ye ministers of death, say, is it lawful,
Ere everlasting darkness shade my eyes,
T' exchange some parting words with these my friends,
The lov'd companions of my better days,
Companions too, and partners in affliction?
This mercy only I implore. You wear
The shapes of men, nor are your bosoms harden'd
To every tender feeling.

#### FIRST GREEK.

Duty bids us

Perform our monarch's orders; but we bear Hearts that can sympathize with others' woe. Princess, enjoy thy wish; and would to heav'n Our pity might recall the fatal sentence!

I thank thee, soldier.

[The First Greek signs to the priests and soldiers, who fall back.

Is it thus, my friends,

With eyes that court the earth, and mournful silence, You greet your once-beloved Polyxena?

FIRST CAPTIVE.

I cannot speak to her; my heart's too full.

Oh, my lov'd mistress!——

# POLYXENA.

Your affliction melts me.

I thought that I had banish'd from my soul
My sex's weakness; but your tears o'ercome
My firmest resolution. Death appears
Array'd in terrors now. And can death be
So painful to the wretched? Oh, my friends!
Our frail and erring nature shrinks appall'd
From the best balm of woe. In the still grave
No tyrant tortures, and no captive groans.

### CAPTIVE.

The grave, alas! from our despairing eyes Shall hide that form for ever.

# POLYXENA.

Cease, oh cease

These fond complaints. We soon shall meet again;
Shall meet to part no more, in happier climes,
Where justice reigns, and with fair peace reside,
Joys ever young, and unalloy'd by fear.

# CASSANDRA.

Yes, best-lov'd maid! for worth like thine the gods
Shall with new raptures gild Elysian plains.
Oh, with what transport, in those blissful seats,
Shall our congenial spirits meet again!
But we are destin'd, in this vale of sorrow,
Still to drag on the burthen of our woes:

Thou soon shalt be at rest.

## POLYXENA.

Oh my Cassandra,
That I am doom'd in early youth to perish,
Moves not my tears. The pomp of sacrifice,
These guards you frowning priests, that knife, which soon
Shall drink my streaming blood, appal not me;
I hail my wish'd deliverance. And yet
There is, Cassandra, still one anxious thought
That weighs upon my heart: I fear to name it:
My mother——

## CASSANDRA.

Oh Polyxena! what words Shall I employ to sooth thy soul to peace?

# POLYXENA.

Enough! You dare not speak. 'Tis as I thought. Now I indeed am wretched!

# CASSANDRA.

Your impatience

Conceives me not aright. At first, indeed,
The transports of her grief were wild and vehement,
As when fierce tempests dash the foaming Hellespont
On the Sigean promontory's base;
But soon subsided. More compos'd at length,
She bears her fate in silent resignation.

#### POLYXENA.

Oh, ye immortal powers! in this hour
Of sharp affliction, and severest trial,
Sustain her drooping spirits!—I am now
Restor'd to peace, and without shrinking face
The sacrificer.—Soldiers, I am ready;
Lead on. Farewell for ever! My Cassandra,
Once more farewell! I read thy thoughts, my sister;
But be assur'd, Polyxena will never
Disgrace the noble race from whence she sprung.—

Ah me! that well-known voice!—

HECUBA, (behind the scenes.)

Off! give me way;

I will not be detain'd.

POLYXENA.

Hide me, Cassandra,

Oh hide me from her sight! I cannot bear it.

My spirits fail——

CASSANDRA.

This more than all I feared!

SCENE IV.

CASSANDRA, POLYXENA, &C. HECUBA.

HECUBA.

Where is my child? Oh lead me, lead me to her.

They shall not tear her from me. Ha! she's pale,
Breathless, and motionless! Alas! she's dead.

Inhuman murderers! you have been too quick.

Once more I would have pressed her cheek to mine;
Once more have kissed her lips; once more have heard
Her soothing voice.

CASSANDRA.

Oh, yet be patient.

HECUBA.

What, shall she not be mine in death? No, no.

I will not loose this last embrace. At least
Her cold breast I may press to mine, and cling
About her lifeless limbs, those few sad hours
Which I have yet to breathe. For age and thraldom,
And grief must quickly drag me to the shades.

## CASSANDRA,

She is not dead. Oh wretched Hecuba, It is thy frantic sorrow bends her down, When her free spirit, worthy of her race, Would spurn her haughty tyrants.

#### HECUBA.

Ha! she breathes-

She moves! Some god restores her! Speak to me,
Speak, my Polyxena, oh bliss unhop'd for!
Again my ear shall drink the tuneful accents
Of my lov'd child. Oh speak to me, Polyxena!

Oh, madam! I would answer you, but cannot.

My feeble spirits fled at your approach.

But I am blest, thus folded in thy arms;

Oh in this lov'd embrace let me expire!

#### HECUBA.

Expire! Oh no, my daughter! thou shalt live, Live long, to comfort my declining age, And to be blest thyself.—Ha! what are these,
These shapes of terror, whose ill-omen'd looks
Wither my springing hopes? What mean these wreaths,
Yon white-rob'd priests, this dreadful preparation?
Oh horrible! A gloomy light breaks in,
And all my misery rushes full upon me.
I stagger with the weight. And must she die?
Oh my distracted heart! My child, my child!

FIRST GREEK.

Forgive us, madam, what our office bids;
But the time fleets apace. The rites await you.

POLYXENA.

I come.

#### HECUBA.

And wilt thou leave me then for ever?
Ye cruel men, will nothing move your pity?
Lo! I am prostrate in the dust before you,
A queen, whose pray'rs have many a captive Greek
Redeem'd from death, while Troy had yet a being.
Now, beyond hope, they weep! Look on this virgin.
Behold her tender youth, her blooming beauty.
Have you not human feelings? Are you fathers?
If you are fathers you will feel for me.
Shall her blood stream on an unholy altar?

No god delights in human sacrifice.

Pelides' anger slept in Hector's urn.

He gave me back the body of my son.

He wept, when Priam wept: he ceas'd from war,

That funeral honours might attend his foe,

And the last duties sooth parental grief.

# SCENE V.

HECUBA, &c. ULYSSES.

#### ULYSSES.

Whence this delay? Have woman's tears, my friends,
The force, in Grecian breasts, to conquer duty?
And dread ye not Atrides' wrath? Oh, queen,
Reluctant I approach thee, and declare,
With aching bosom, an ungrateful message,
The kings demand thy daughter, and the priest
Expects the victim; while the swarming soldiers
Impatient murmur, and stern looks of wrath,
And dark suspicion fix on Agamemnon.
Resist ye cannot. Then let wisdom teach
Submission to superior power and fate.

#### HECUBA.

Is it Ulysses? May a wretched slave Freely address the free? May I, than whom More abject none now grovels upon earth, Broken with age and grief, weigh'd down by chains, To thee, a scepter'd lord, presumptuous raise My voice.

ULYSSES.

Speak boldly, since I give thee license.

HECUBA.

Cam'st thou not once disguis'd, a spy in Troy?

I need not tell thee what thine eyes beheld.

HECUBA.

Helen discover'd, and reveal'd thy secret?

ULYSSES.

Ulysses then escap'd no vulgar danger.

HECUBA.

Who then preserv'd thee? Wast thou not a suppliant?
Whose knees didst thou embrace? whose faith implore?

Thy pity shelter'd a defenceless man.

HECUBA.

Thou whom I pitied, pity, pity me!

I pity thee. My life, oh Hecuba,
I own thy gift. Live thou. I will protect thee.
Thou gav'st me liberty. Be free. No bonds
Confine thee. Freely choose thy place of rest.

Go where thou wilt in peace. The kings of Greece Shall ratify my word.

HECUBA.

Oh save my child!,

ULYSSES.

The counsel which the common good of Greece Requires, my duty bids me give; what Greece Decrees perform. Oh fair and royal virgin, The rites await thee. Uncompell'd proceed. Force will dishonour thee. Thy doom is fix'd By men and gods.

HECUBA.

Oh, my Polyxena!

Embrace his knees. Pour out thy soul before him. He has a child. He will be won by prayer.

POLYXENA.

Forbear, my mother. King of Ithaca,

Turn not away. Fear not that I shall grasp

Thy hand, and supplicate thy aid or pity.

For her alone, by age and sorrow broken,

Source of my life, and dearest to my heart,

For her I mourn. To me, death is most welcome.

I pour my life upon your barbarous altar,

A princess, not degraded to a slave.

Pure, unpolluted, worthy of my race,

YOL, 1. 2 C

Through mighty kings from highest Jove deriv'd,

I mingle with the spirits of my fathers.

The dead are blest, whose glory shall survive.

But, oh, how wretched they who live dishonour'd.

ULYSSES.

Assembled nations, virgin, shall applaud thee, Greece melt in tears, and lofty poets tell Thy praise to distant times.

# POLYXENA,

My noble mother,
Most kind, and most belov'd, farewell, farewell!
I bear thy greeting to thy royal husband;
To Paris; Troilus; and godlike Hector.
Farewell, Cassandra, sister of my heart,
Partner of all my feelings! Priam's race
The sword cuts short. But their triumphant virtue
Shall tread on force and wrong, and be immortal.
Let these attend me, for the decent pride
Of virgin modesty survives the dart
Of cold, oblivious death. Lead to the altar.

# SCENE VI.

HECUBA, CASSANDRA, CAPTIVES.

CASSANDRA.

My sister! I shall never see thee more.

Where shall I turn? Fain would I follow thee

To catch thy parting look, thy latest sigh.

But, oh, my mother! Oh, what words shall sooth
Her bitter pangs, or win her still to live,
When all her refuge is the mournful urn?

Daily they die, who live but to be wretched.

Soft, she revives.

#### HECUBA.

Where is she? Bring me to her.

I have much to say. They shall not part us yet.

CASSANDRA.

Thou speak'st, alas, to those who cannot help thee.

Cassandra's voice? Oh let me hear thy sister.

Oh, gods, she is not here. They have borne her off.

Ev'n now, perhaps, ev'n at this very moment,

The steel is at her breast. Yet, murd'rous priest,

Yet will I stay thine arm. It is too late.

The blow is given: the altar reeks with blood.

My child is dead. I gave thee life, Ulysses.

Death, death, is all I ask.

#### CASSANDRA.

Oh, recollect

What thou hast been; queen of a mighty people; Mother of heroes. Those are truly great, Who bravely suffer.

#### HECUBA.

Thou hast spoken well,

Belov'd Cassandra! Once again I feel
A soul, superior to my savage masters,

And I will bear with firmness. Ha! a pang,
Unfelt before, shoots through my trembling nerves.

My eyes are dim. I seek in vain to find thee.

Dids't thou not speak? Ah, no. A sound confus'd
Rings in my failing ears. Is it the murmur

Of numerous spirits crowding to the Styx?

I see the god who bears the potent wand

Which the pale ghosts obey! Death stands before me.

A moment, and the sisters cut the thread.

#### CASSANDRA.

Words of ill omen hast thou said, my mother. The mighty gods avert them!

#### HECUBA.

Words of comfort.

My sorrows shall be soon at rest. No city,
In wide extended Greece, shall see the wife
Of Priam captive, and a slave. The soil
Of Troy, my husband's kingdom, yet shall hold
My ashes. Now I come, Polyxena!
Cassandra! wilt thou linger yet? I die.
Receive my parting breath.

CASSANDRA.

There fled the spirit.

Hecuba is at rest. And I remain

Last of my race, but not to suffer long.

No kindred voice shall sooth my parting hour:

My death shall no religious pomp adorn:

No tears shall flow for me. By hostile hands

I fall inglorious on a foreign soil,

Defrauded of my vengeance, while the furies

Point all their terrors at a greater crime!

Oh, dames of Troy! assist me yet, assist

With funeral rites my mother's sacred ashes

In the sad urn to close, and sooth her ghost.

How long, my friends, how long will angry gods

Withhold our wish'd release.

### SCENE VII.

(Cassandra, Captives, with the body of Hecuba, Ulysses, Agamemnon. Cassandra remains in a pensive posture looking upon the body.)

ULYSSES.

Behold, oh king,

A sight to glut thy vengeance. Lo, where stands

This proud Cassandra, this disdainful maid,

Who spurn'd thy proffer'd love, and mock'd thy power.

How fall'n, how humbled now!

CASSANDRA, (not observing them.)

Oh Hecuba,

The measure of thy woes at length is full.

Virtue lies low: the good are trod in dust!

Injustice, the proud heart, the fierce oppressor,

Are cloth'd in purple, worshipped on the throne,

And bear the rod of power!

AGAMEMNON.

Methinks, Cassandra,

Less fury sparkles in those radiant eyes,

Than when we parted last. With joy, perhaps,

Thou view'st the ruin which thy pride has made.

#### CASSANDRA.

Insulting man! who, with unhallow'd tongue, Dar'st violate the sanctity of grief,

Now, even now, triumphant as thou art,

The hour approaches, and the stern avenger,

Jove's awful minister, prepares her scourge,

And rouses all her terrors. Ha! what means

This sudden transport? My full bosom heaves.

I burn with sacred rage.

ULYSSES.

Ill boding woman,

Hence with thine empty dreams!

CASSANDRA.

[It thunders.

The thunder speaks

The sentence of the god!

AGAMEMNON.

A sacred horror

Creeps through my shivering veins.

CASSANDRA.

What forms are these?

Lo, how they toss their flaming brands. I know The dreadful sisters. They that haunt the guilty. Tisiphone is there.

CAPTIVE.

How wild her looks!

Her voice how awful!

CASSANDRA.

See, the vessel bound O'er the dark wave. Behold the destin'd port. But fate denies the period of thy toils.

Thy Wisdom Nemesis derides. What woes
In black succession rise! What forms of terror!

What widow'd years await Penelope!

But thou shalt never know repose. Ev'n Ithaca

Prepares no rest for thee!

CAPTIVE.

The righteous gods

Denounce their vengeance on Ulysses.

CASSANDRA.

Ha!

The scene is chang'd. Are those Mycenæ's tow'rs?

Mourn, mourn, thou haughty city! Lo, he comes,
The victor comes! Throw wide thy gates! Receive
The long triumphal pomp! What smiling form
Greets him with looks of love, and well feign'd joy?
Lo, the bright palace of the race of Atreus!
And, hark! the vaulted roof re-echoes now
With shrieks of lamentation, and dismay.
'Tis done. Lo, where th' adulteress grasps the steel,
Red with her husband's blood! Polyxena!
Thou art reveng'd. The gods, the gods are just.

\*\*\* POLYXENA was written many years ago, and some printed copies distributed among the Author's friends. Considerable insertions, and alterations have since been made, with a view to render the poem more worthy of the public notice. Though the order of the scenes, and the conduct of the fable, are not strictly copied from any antient model, the incidents, and the characters, are all borrowed from the Greek poets. The Author is sensible that the heroic tales of classical antiquity have lost their currency. But trite as they may appear; repugnant to modern manners, and sometimes to all probability, they offer many situations, natural, interesting, and pathetic, in the highest degree. He has, of course, endeavoured to avail himself of the corresponding scenes in the Hecuba of Euripides, the most tragic of all poets in the opinion of Aristotle. The "Bard of Pella" certainly touched the springs of the passions with unequalled force and delicacy, and under the shelter of his "magic name," it is hoped this drama may find indulgence.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



# DRAMATIC

AND

# NARRATIVE

## POEMS.

BY

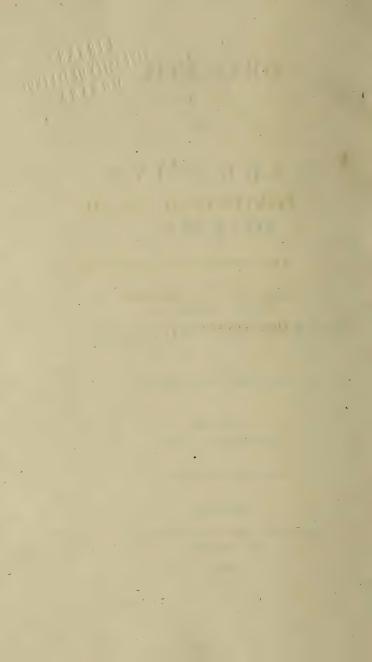
# JOHN JOSHUA EARL OF CARYSFORT, K.P.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.
NARRATIVE POEMS.

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### CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

THE REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

THE STATUES.

### ERRATA.—VOL. II.

50. 1. 15. for Imogen read Innogen. 229. 1. 9. for footsteps read footstep.

203. l. 2. for glitt'ring read glittering.
321. l. 7. for advent'rous read adventurous.

. The Reader is desired particularly to attend to these two instances, but he will find many others where his taste will lead him to restore the vowel which has been omitted in the printing.

THE

### REVENGE

0 F

# GUENDOLEN.

BOOK I.

THE Invasion of Loëgria. Locrine assembles his Army.

His Interview with Estrildis. His March. Estrildis
is comforted by Boarex. Description of the residence
of Estrildis.

\*\*\* Brutus, descended from Æneas, is said to have planted a colony in Britain. He found the country inhabited by giants, whom he subdued and exterminated, after many conflicts; in which Corineus, one of his followers, distinguished himself so much, that he was rewarded with the sovereignty of Cornwall, which was called after his name. Brutus, at his death, divided the rest of the island among his sons: Albanact had the northern part, called from him Albania; Camber had the country between the Severn and the Irish sea, called Cambria; the third and largest share, called Loëgria, fell to Locrine. He married Guendolen, the daughter of Corineus, and had a son by her, called Madan.

Humber, King of the Huns, having invaded the dominions of Albanact, who was defeated and killed, in a great battle, advanced to the frontiers of Loëgria, where he was encountered by Locrine, and lost the battle and his life. Among the captives was a beautiful lady, called Estrildis, of whom Locrine became enamoured; but fearing the resentment of Corineus, concealed his commerce with her till the death of that prince, when he divorced Guendolen, and acknowledged Estrildis for his queen. Guendolen took refuge in Cornwall, and raising an army, invaded the dominions of Locrine. Here the action of the poem begins.

The great celebrity of the Romans accounts for the propensity of other nations to draw their original from the same source; and the fables of Geoffry of Mon-

mouth found an easy reception in this island, as they gratified the vanity, and agreed with the reigning prejudices of the nation. Milton, whose extensive learning, and penetrating criticism, could have detected the imposture, has given new importance to the legends of Brutus, and his successors, by repeating them in the first Book of his History of England, for the sake, as he says, of our poets and rhetoricians. The apotheosis of Sabra, the daughter of Locrine and Estildis, is entirely of his invention, and makes a principal ornament of the Mask of Comus.

The author was led, by the notes to the last Canto of Mr. Hayley's Essay on Epic Poetry, to try the effect of the northern mythology in a composition of the narrative kind. The genius of Gray, whose imagination appears to have been strongly engaged by the wild sublimity of that system, would, no doubt, have produced a poem, which would have lived through ages, if he had pursued the idea suggested by Mr. Gibbon: and a noble work may hereafter be raised upon the splendid Fables, and allegories of Hindostan. In making an excursion into a new field of poetical ornament, the Author was not actuated by any presumptuous ambition, but merely endeavoured to assist himself in forming his own opinion upon the question touched by Mr. Hayley. Even this slight attempt may contribute to incite some powerful Muse. Virgil and Milton drew materials and hints, for their immortal poems, from obscure and feeble authors. They were able to develop,

and display in all their lustre, those beauties which meaner intellects could hardly conceive.

With respect to the general question as to the value of machinery in the higher kinds of poetry, it seems most reasonable to consider it as neither absolutely necessary, nor wholly to be rejected. The utmost sublimity and pathos may often be attained without it; but it is supported by the authority, and example of whom? Homer, Virgil, Euripides, Eschylus, and Sophocles, Tasso, Milton, Shakspeare. In opposition to this most weighty testimony, we have the opinion of Boileau, and the example of Lucan. The former probably did not mean to give a general opinion. His object was only to expose the folly and bad taste of some pretenders to poetical fame of his own age and nation. The latter was, indeed, the author of a noble work, deserving high reputation, and of great excellence in its kind: but how inferior, in every point of view, to the great authors we have just enumerated! Quintilian thinks that Lucan, by his Pharsalia, had entitled himself to the praise, rather of an orator than a poet.

The liberty of coining new words has been assumed by most writers in verse. But no licence ought to be used with more caution and reserve. In every case, the analogies of the language should be scrupulously observed, for the sake of precision, and clearness, as well as the general harmony of the style. There is not, it is believed, any authority for the word Resorb, which will be found in page 11; but absorb is in daily and familiar

use, and the power of the particle re is obvious to every English reader. The Author knew no established term which would exactly answer his purpose, and he trusts he shall stand excused for having introduced this word, the sense of which can scarcely be mistaken. It was pointed out to him by Gray's ode in the Album of the Chartreuse.

---- Me resorbens
In medios violenta fluctus.

### REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

### BOOK I.

On faith! and thou, connubial sanctity!

Mother of virtue, and domestic joy!

Ordain'd by heaven to knit in holy league

Of love, and common benefit, mankind!

From your just laws despis'd, what evils spring!

An haughty princess vindicates in arms

Her slighted beauty, and her injur'd bed:

Sullied with gore, o'er mangled carcases

Th' obstructed river b rolls his angry wave,
While kindred heroes fall by mutual wounds:
A glorious chief, by vulgar hands expires:
And the fair partner of his guilty love,
Pale with foreboding fears, expects the sword
Of vengeance, and th' inexorable doom!
Such be the subject of the moral lay.
A mournful tale, from ancient days derived,
What time Ausonian Brutus' warlike race
Their sceptre rear'd o'er Britain's fertile isle.

Now from Belerium,<sup>c</sup> and the western main, From Menna's rocky coast, and the rude craggs Of high Ocrinum, from the source of Vale, To where Voluba spreads her winding bays, And proud Pendennis, far at sea descried,

b The Sture, or Stour, a river, on whose banks Locrine fought the forces of Cornwall. There are many rivers in England known by this name. That which crossing Dorsetshire flows into the sea in Christchurch Bay, seems to agree best with the other circumstances of the story.

c Ancient names of places in Cornwall.

Directs the Tyrian mariner, who steers

His vessel, freighted from the spicy East,

For Cenio's ample port; from the tall cliff,

Where bold Corineus defoil'd his Giant-foe,

Hurl'd headlong to the main, the troubled waves

Roll'd back affrighted, and the mountain shook.

From Cambala, whose lucid waters stray'd

As yet unstain'd with blood, hereafter doom'd

To witness horrid war, in guilty fight

Britons with Britons mix'd, and Arthur slain.

From all her mountains, and from all her streams,

Cornubia sends her armed sons to war,

Breathing revenge. Before th' assembled tribes

d Corineus was a leader who accompanied Brutus, and had Cornwall as his share. His name is commonly written Corinæus. The pronunciation I have adopted, as best suited to my metre, is sufficiently justified by the authority of Spencer's Fa. Q. B. II. c. 10. It is related of this fabulous hero, that he wrestled with Gogmagog, one of the giants, native of the island, twelve cubits in height, and prevailing after a vigorous contest, carried him upon his shoulders to a high rock, called ever since Langoëmagog, and threw him into the sea.

e A river, on whose banks the battle was fought between Mordred and king Arthur.

Their injur'd princess Guendolen appears. Faded and wan she seems; but shame, and rage, And mingled pride, contending in her breast. With transient colour flush her varying cheek. No costly gems upon her forehead blaze, Loose to the wind her hair disorder'd flies, And for the regal purple's graceful folds She wears the garb of mourning. Pity seiz'd The crowd, and for a while suspended rage. But as she told the story of her woes, And perjur'd Locrine's guilt, Corineus' daughter, Abandon'd, outcast, and a slave f advanc'd To fill her bed and throne; when, glowing now With generous pride, and graceful indignation, She call'd upon her mighty father's shade; Remembrance of their prince, their country's honour, Kindled in every breast the flame of vengeance. They clash'd their sounding arms, and rush'd along.

f Estrildis, taken in the camp of Humber, king of the Huns, when he was defeated by Locrine.

And now, the rapid Tamar pass'd, invade Loëgria's frontier, and defenceless plains, With sudden war and ruthless devastation. As when th' inhabitant of those fair isles Beyond th' Atlantic, when the sky serene And the calm air invites, wooes the fresh breeze, Which, lightly sweeping o'er the level deep, Moistens his pinions in the cooling wave; Delighted he inhales the grateful air. Sudden the tumid billows rise; the earth Meanwhile, of ill prophetic, murmurs forth A sullen sound: trembling and pale, he flies. In vain. High o'er his head, the dreadful roar Of waters, from the whole collected sea Rais'd horrible, pursues with hideous din His flight; and now before him foaming spreads The vast o'erarching deluge; now it breaks In more than thunder, and th' insatiate deep, Howling o'er cultur'd fields, and peopled towns, Resorbs a nation with the turning waves.

Not with less horror pale Loëgria shook. And now the rumour reach'd, where by the banks Of that fair stream, whose winding course divides Loëgria from the lands by Camber rul'd, In dalliance soft, and unsuspecting ease, With her his Scythian spouse, the fair Estrildis, Acknowledg'd now his queen, the monarch lay, And all the weighty cares of state resign'd. Rous'd from his dream of bliss, but not dismay'd, He bids his warlike chiefs appear in arms; And now in marshall'd ranks his veteran bands Innumerable, beat th' extended plain With sounding footsteps, as they move embattled. Along the files the mighty Locrine darts Exulting his experienc'd eye, and glows With the bright hope of promis'd victory. He gives the word. As by one soul inform'd, The marching myriads halt. Around their king

Advancing from the ranks assemble now The leaders of his battles. Rising slow, With look compos'd, speaking deliberate courage, Firm to sustain, not rashly tempting danger, The monarch thus: "Brave partners of my toils, And partners of my glory; you, who met With me the bold invader of our realm, Th' impetuous Humber, when with spoils adorn'd, And trophies, torn from bleeding Albany, He pass'd our limits, and return'd no more. 'Tis mine to mingle where the battle burns, And bear the death of thousands on my spear. Yet not in fierce and savage deeds of arms, Where blind revenge, or lust of conquest drives. Your king delights. Mine be the sword of justice; Nor you shall sully your victorious arms In an unrighteous cause. Then hear, and judge. If I have wrong'd the banish'd Guendolen, Or mov'd by mercy, by affection swayed, To lightest penance doom'd enormous guilt,

The prince appeals his people. To relate With what fond care, and unsuspecting kindness I cherish'd that false serpent; what the toils I bore, how oft in hardy battle bled To fix her father's throne, what now avails? Not with domestic broils to shake our peace Content, the sorceress each factious spirit, All whom the sense of guilt made desperate, To join in league, and dark conspiracy, By promis'd gain allur'd, or hope of safety; That she might hold in bonds our sovereign state, And trample on our high, imperial crown. Yet more, my son, h the destin'd heir of empire, Her impious arts have from my side seduc'd, Plac'd in her father's court, and guarded there, Hostage of my subjection. This I bore, Studious of public peace, and slow to vengeance. At length, by long impunity made bold,

h Madan, the son of Locrine and Guendolen, was brought up with his grandfather, Corineus, in Cornwall.

She grasp'd my sceptre with more fierce impatience, And practis'd cursed spells against my life. Yet mindful of the love I once had borne her, The glories of her race, our kindred lineage, Still mercy temper'd justice. From my throne And bed divorc'd, I spar'd her forfeit head. Now force must win what fraud in vain essay'd, And bind Loëgria in Cornubian chains. Nor mov'd alone by love, but public care, I led Estrildis to the bridal bed. She is no princess of a rival nation: Last of a noble race in arms renown'd, With lineal heroes she may grace the throne, But not with faction shake it." Locrine thus, With fair pretence, and specious gloss of words, Veil'd the foul breach of faith and holy vows. Not unapproving heard the chiefs: (to them Dear was his person, dear his martial ardour:) Nor much solicitous, with nice regard, To weigh the right, avow'd their prince's cause.

Perhaps the pow'rs of heav'n their partial minds Sway'd to erroneous judgment; that proud guilt Hurl'd from his high presumptuous hope, though rais'd On prudent counsels, and on warlike force, Their justice might to trembling man proclaim. Each to his post repair'd, and to his troops Announc'd determin'd war. At once arose Their universal shout, that shook the sky. The monarch hears with joy. Meanwhile he seeks His fair Estrildis in the secret bower. All bath'd in tears the pensive nymph he found, With sad reflection pale, and anxious fears. Fondly he strain'd her to his manly breast, And thus: "Why weeps my love, my best Estrildis? Thy Locrine's arm is not unskill'd in war, And Fortune bears my standard to the field." "Oh had Estrildis," thus the queen replied, "Cut short ev'n in the blossom of her youth, Perish'd ere yet she lisp'd a mother's name; Ere she had seen a noble father slain,

In battle vanquish'd in a foreign land! Or had at least more fav'ring gods assign'd To her the common ruin of her race! Had war's remorseless hand, in one sad day, Mix'd with the sire's the daughter's virgin blood, Ere in the secret shade, with guilty joy, I listen'd to thy tender tale of love, And with fond rapture prest thee to my heart, Thy hands yet reeking with my father's blood! Now his dear image haunts my broken-sleep. Dreadful he frowns, upbraids my parricide, Dooms me to horrid pains, and ling'ring death, Or worse than death, to savage Guendolen Delivers me, a trembling, helpless victim. With kinder gesture now, and look benignant, He whispers soft forgiveness in my ear. Sudden the scene is chang'd. The cry of woe Invades my sense, the scream of female horror. I see thee stretch'd before me, pale and lifeless, And pierc'd with wounds, and stiff with clotted blood,"

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Would'st thou forget our loves?" the hero cried: "No; when these black ideas haunt thy fancy, Bid fond remembrance dwell on ev'ry kiss, Each stolen rapture, and each soft endearment. Pledge of our mutual bliss, thy gentle Sabra Displays her blooming charms. Oh fondly press The beauteous maid to thy maternal bosom, Then, if thou canst, wish we had never lov'd. Nor deem that Locrine was thy father's foe: For honour was our strife, not hate or vengeance. The brave, my best belov'd, still prize the brave, And, might the hero's shade revisit earth, Pleas'd would his martial hand bestow thy beauty On him whose prowess could surpass his own," Thus sooth'd he his fair spouse. A pleasing calm Stole o'er her soul, a sweet suspense of grief. She rais'd her streaming eyes, and smil'd in tears. So, from the region of the sultry South, When dark collected vapours rolling on, Have quench'd the radiance of the summer morn,

And the loud thunder growls, and rain descends, Sudden the golden Sun darts forth his beams, Scatt'ring the thin skirts of the passing storm; Then smiles the joyful earth; but other clouds With dark and threat'ning aspect lour behind. Now warlike cares demand the chief. He rose Prepar'd to part. Again her sorrows flow, Again the echoing roof resounds her cries. She beats her wretched breast, entreats his stay, And hangs upon his robe in frantic grief; Exhausted now, she faints. The gentle Sabra With milder action presses with her lips His hand, while from her eyes the trickling moisture Falls silent: he, though firm of soul, not proof 'Gainst human feelings, turns his face to hide The tear he checks in vain, and hastes away. And now he reach'd the plain, where, sheath'd in arms And rang'd in just array, Loëgria's youth Expect their leader. He with joy surveys Their numerous files, and marks their bold demeanour.

Nor less elate, they with admiring eyes Beheld their graceful chief. He seem'd a god. Such to their fathers, by the sacred wave Of their ador'd Scamander, when the foe Sought the vain shelter of their wooden walls, Appear'd the mighty Hector, or confest To mortal eyes, the dreadful god of war Flam'd in the foremost battle, Fear and flight Precede. Wild horror seiz'd each Grecian heart. "Ye brave assertors of your country's rights, Ye genuine sons of Troy," the hero cried, "Whence is this mighty nation, whose bold arms Insult our frontiers, and provoke our wrath? Are these the matchless warriors, they who late Suppliant, with outstretch'd arms, implor'd our aid, When the rude natives from their cloudy hills Scourg'd back the weak invaders, who but ill Sustain'd their aspect fierce, and giant strength, When, loos'ning from their seats the rooted rocks, They hurl'd th' enormous ruin on their foe?

Then, suppliant, they implored our aid, and wag'd Successful war, with forces not their own. . Presumptuous! they who would our country seize Have none but by our gift. Advance, my friends, Advance your ensigns, lift your shining arms. They view our fertile plains with envious eyes; Those fertile plains superior valour won, Superior valour guards. Hence let them fly 'Midst rugged rocks, and desert caves, to seek A refuge from our wrath." He spoke; at once A thousand banners float upon the air; At once they march: a thousand instruments Sound forth their martial strains, and as they move Loud rings the brazen armour. Neighing steeds Whirl o'er the smoking plain the scythed cars; Earth shakes, and heav'n's wide-echoing arch resounds. Upon their dancing plumes, and glitt'ring helms, Sits Confidence. Elate with hope they move, And eager for the war: some god deceives Their dazzled sense, and urges on to ruin.

Dire omens else had warn'd, and signs portentous. The air was darken'd; o'er their heads the raven Oft flapp'd his wing; the towering eagle scream'd, Claiming his destin'd prey. But now apart, And distant from his host, the dauntless Locrine Pour'd to his guardian pow'rs his ardent pray'r. "Oh thou, bright author of my race, fair queen Of smiles, and young desires, delight of heav'n! The joyful earth thy genial pow'r obeys, And gives the fragrant rose to deck thy bower. For thee stern Neptune stills his raging waves, And touch'd by thy soft pow'r, the gloomy Dis Unbends his sullen brow. The sire of gods On thee, his best belov'd, delighted smiles, Sooth'd with th' ambrosial kiss, and to thy hand Permits th' almighty sceptre. Goddess, now Assist thy vot'ry, whom proud Juno's ire, Still hostile to our Trojan race, pursues! By Ida's conscious shades, where first enraptur'd Anchises gaz'd on thy immortal charms:

By the soft pleasures of thy Paphian bower.

Protect the passion by thyself inspir'd!

And thou, impetuous Mars, before whose spear

Withers the strength of nations; thou, to whom

I vow'd my vigorous youth, my guardian god!

Aid thou my vengeance, and direct my sword!"

Thus pray'd the hero, but he pray'd in vain.

The queen of love, the dreadful god of arms,

Well pleas'd attend, but angry Jove denies.

Mean-while, in fair Estrildis' anxious hreast
Conflicting passions fought. Th' attendant train
Essay'd the charm of soothing words, or drew
Spells of more moving force from tuneful harps
Attemper'd to soft voices; soft as those
Which nightly floating o'er Trinacrian seas
Melodious, ravish'd the delighted sense,
And lur'd to sweet destruction. And their song
Was fram'd to win upon the ear of care,
With light and playful airs, inspiring joy.
Of amorous wiles they told, and moon-light pranks

Of gamesome fairies, who in merry mood, With shapes uncouth, and strange fantastic visions. Mock the deluded sense of simple swain. Unnotic'd died away the dulcet sounds. Ill-boding fears sat heavy at her breast, And irksome memory of sorrows past, And absence from the lord of her desires, And conscious sense of guilt, suppress'd in vain. Yet oft she check'd th' invading woe, and strove, Decking with languid smiles her faded cheek, To rouse expiring hope, As oft recoil'd, With double force, the melancholy train Of sad ideas on her tortur'd soul. Thus with alternate sway, imperfect hope, And keen corroding anguish, swell her breast, Till with the painful struggle over-worn, She sinks in tears, and yielded all to grief. Like some fair elm which lifts her graceful head, And bears her leafy honours to the clouds, In all their summer pride. The fierce south-west

Tempestuous, now with strong continued blast
Beats on her side, and howls amidst her boughs;
Frequent the crackling branches bend, and wave
Convulsive to and fro; now yielding stoop
Before the whirlwind; now with force elastic
Rebounding, once again aspire to heaven.
Louder the tempest swells, the lab'ring roots
Scarce grasp the crumbling soil; now crashing break;
Prone falls the tree, and loads the groaning earth.

An ancient dame there was, to whom the charge Of young Estrildis, when untimely death Seiz'd on his fav'rite queen, great Humber gave.

She, when the chief unfurl'd his vent'rous sails,

And brav'd the terrors of a sea untried,

In quest of happier climes, and endless fame,

Follow'd her lovely pupil, and when low

The monarch lay, beneath the British sword,

The partner of her chains, she sooth'd her grief;

And now her fortune shar'd, for fair Estrildis

Priz'd her o'er all, and as a mother lov'd.

Her name was Boarex. The conscious moon Oft had beheld her, in her native wilds, Tracing with mystic rites the Runic rhyme; And oft had felt her pow'rful charms, compell'd To stoop reluctant from her cloudy throne, And to a mortal's daring view lay bare The dreadful secrets of the world unknown. With grief she saw the queen, her darling care, Oppress'd, and yielding to despair; she saw, And lent her ready aid. At her command Th' officious crowd retire. Approaching near, Softly she kiss'd the mourner's cheek, and thus With soothing words address'd. "And weeps my child, Of me forgetful, and my faithful love; Forgetful of the wonders of my art, Which bends to my control the stubborn fates? Yet lives thy Boarex, and while the blood Flows in her aged veins, she lives for thee." Raising her languid head, Estrildis said, "What art, alas! can heal my wounded mind,

Restore my innocence, recall the past? Yet save my Locrine, and I bear to live." "Daughter," she cried, "what frantic words are these? No crime is thine, for 'tis no crime to love, What though the banish'd Guendolen behold With impotence of rage, and envious eyes, Thy beauty grace her abdicated throne, Exult, my child, and thank the bounteous gods, Who crown with fair success thy noble love, And bid the poor dejected captive rise A glorious queen, and spurn her haughty foe. Futurity's dark volumes to thy view Soon shall my art unfold, and let fair hope Glow on thy cheek, and lighten in thine eyes. When the black frown of jealous Guendolen Gloom'd on thy stolen joys, and with pale fear Chill'd all the raptures of thy secret bower; Frustrate by me, the ill to thee design'd Recoil'd upon herself, and from her brow I tore the diadem to beam on thine.

And though Cornubia, arming in her cause, Point all her vengeance at thy Locrine's head, My spells can turn the thirsty dart aside, And from the gloomy Hela's i drear abode Call forth those dreadful ministers of wrath, At whose approach the central earth is mov'd, And the great sun grows pale." While yet she speaks, Estrildis' colour glows, and fades, by turns. Her bosom heaves with kindling hope, and fear Subsides, and busy conscience stings no more. Silent awhile she stood, and doubting still. But Boarex, who with attentive eye Had mark'd the secret workings of her mind, Her rising spirit, and her bright'ning eyes, Well knew her purpose gain'd, and ere the train Of melancholy thought, and fears prophetic, Could o'er her breast resume their sway, with words Of cheering import, as might best confirm

i Hela was the goddess of death among the northern nations.

Her hopes new entertain'd, she thus pursu'd. " Not with vain sounds, my daughter, to beguile Thy credulous ear, but with performance full To satisfy thy wish, have I approach'd thee. For this, when night descends, and o'er our heads The moon rides high, upon the silent stream Spreading her glimm'ring rays, and rightly call'd Aids the slow-mutter'd charm, seek we the grove, And with observance due, and powerful verse, Invoke the dreadful deities, who weave The fatal web.k Their potent ministers, Slaughter, and flight, attend their high behest, Spare whom they favour, won by sacrifice And prayer, and whom they hate with death confound. These shall befriend us. I will teach thy hand To trace the backward spell, and by what art Compell'd, the spirits that haunt the earth, or tend The gliding wave, or play in floods of fire,

k See Gray's Poems.

Or ride upon the stormy winds, assist The dark designs, and work the will of man." She ended, and Estrildis, re-assur'd, And confident in hope, thus answer'd glad. "Oh more than mother, who to second life Hast wak'd me, sitting in the shade of death, Or worse than death, in comfortless despair!" Speaking she rose. Meanwhile th' attendant train Pensive before the fair pavilion stood, In silent expectation, and with tears Deplor'd the sorrows of their queen; when lo The sounding doors unfold, and forth she comes Radiant with blooming beauty. Joy divine Fills every breast, as when a god appears. The veil, thrown backward from her heav'nly face, Part loosely falling, in transparent folds, Upon her snowy breast, which gently rose, Half hid from mortal view the dazzling charm: Part mingled graceful with her glossy hair, Below her slender waist, in easy ringlets

Flowing with artful negligence. Her eyes Sparkled with liquid fire, and darted quick Contagious madness, thrilling ecstasies, And love inevitable. On her cheek Sported the dimpled smile; and her sweet lips Breathe fragrance, like the tepid breeze that steals O'er eastern seas, and from his dewy wings Shakes spices, and forewarns the mariner Of Ceylon, or the rich Moluccan coast; Or that which sooths th' Arabian youth, reclin'd Beneath the spreading palm, and singing loud In glowing numbers rapturous tales of love. She moves like Venus, when expecting joy She sought the Cyprian bow'r. Before her flew Fair hope, and wanton mirth, and gay desire. The waving myrtles bow'd their fragrant heads In sign of worship, and the lovely rose Put forth spontaneous, while the busy zephyr Gather'd their several sweets, and wafted round Ambrosial odours. Thither soon the graces,

Join'd with the laughing loves, in mimic chains Of roses wreath'd, their willing captive led, The fair Adonis. Such the queen appears, So moves, so looks, so smiles. Her virgins knew Her mind to pleasure turn'd, and light disport. Now breath'd the flute, and in melodious strains Soft voices sung the praise of gentle May; For that kind season now, with all her sweets, And all her varied tints, the place adorn'd. The place was such as poets feign'd of old Hesperian gardens and Elysian scenes. Here spread the level lawn, here gently flow'd The silent river: from the brink uprose The swelling hill thick clad with various trees. Below, the poplar, and the dark-leav'd alder, And the pale willow, whose depending boughs, Mov'd by the sighing breeze, oft lightly sweep, And sweeping, lightly mark the glassy surface. But on the summit the majestic oak Spreads wide his giant arms, the growth of ages.

Here woods are pil'd on woods, hills over hills Successive rise. These, sloping, gently sink Into the vale beneath; while those abrupt Frown o'er the mountain torrent, that now glides With rapid course, and now o'er fragments huge Of broken rocks, by the swift lightning's rage Disjoin'd, or loosen'd by autumnal rains, Across its channel thrown, indignant bounds In foam. Here sunny plains extend, and there Contracted vallies, dark with pendent woods, Through which the gale sounds mournful, and the stream Runs murmuring. Gloomy caves with moss o'ergrown, The dripping grotto, and the bubbling spring, Where fairies haunt. Now seen through distant trees Glitters the rushing cataract. Rude rocks, Enormous piles, and the vast mountain where Upon the airy summit, to the foot Of man impervious, high above the clouds her nest The eagle builds, and hails the rising sun, While yet the nether world is wrapp'd in night, VOL. II.

Here close the scene. And here the opening glade
Invites the eye, while under arching boughs
Sudden appear the cheerful haunts of men;
The seats of industry; the cultur'd plain;
The smoke slow rising from the shelter'd cot;
And farther still the crowded city, whence
A thousand roofs, and glitt'ring domes, reflect
The Sun's meridian beam. The silver lake
Here spreads its lucid bosom, where the sail
Before the breeze scuds lightly; on the banks
Rise fair pavilions; flow'rs of various hues,
And various scents, mix'd with each blooming shrub
To Flora dear, in fair assemblage grow.

Such were the scenes th' enamour'd Locrine gave,
Th' abode of fair Estrildis, and of love.
There in soft ease, and ever varied sports,
She nourish'd amorous thoughts, and fond desire.
Now sooth'd with airy music, now reclin'd
Upon the flow'ry couch, with roses crown'd,
She sees delighted, on the shaven turf,

The nimble dancers tread their wanton maze.

Now in the gilded vessel, proudly gay

With purple streamers, floats; while from afar,

From various instruments, along the waves

Comes soften'd, stealing on the ravish'd ear,

The propagated harmony. Now swell

The notes distinct and clear; now die away,

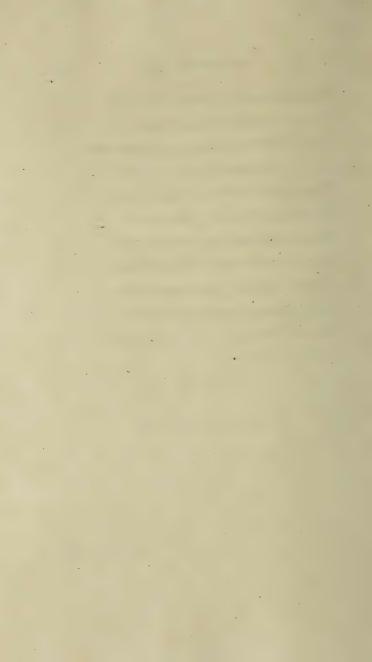
As shifts the breeze reflected from the shore.

Thus till the night her sable wings extend,

And the fair moon provoke to mystic rites,

The lovely dame beguiles the ling'ring hours.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.



THE

## REVENGE

o F

## GUENDOLEN.

BOOK II.

CATALOGUE of both Armies. Embassy from Locrine to the Cornubians. Lamentation of Guendolen.

## REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

## BOOK II.

With rapid march the bold Loëgrian youth
Advancing, leave the Avon far behind,
The Avon then a poor inglorious stream,
Nor grac'd with holy rites, nor poet's song.
Yet oft at eve the solitary swain,
That musing wander'd by the fringed bank,
And mark'd the moon-beam dancing on the wave,
Listen'd with wonder, and delighted awe,
While airy voices in his ravish'd ear
Breath'd sounds harmonious; and the sacred lyre,
Mov'd by the flying touch of hands unseen,
Gave forth her voice divine. For dear, ev'n then,

Dear to the Muses flow'd the gentle stream: Upon whose banks (while in enraptur'd strain Prophetic, rang'd before th' eternal throne, They sung the awful providence of Jove) The mighty bard they saw, whose piercing eye, So fate decreed, glancing from earth to heav'n, With vast capacious spirit, unconfin'd, Grasp'd universal nature, and beyond The narrow limits of the world of sense, On daring pinion soar'd: now sporting light With mirthful fancy in the fields of air, Marking the gambols of the elfin train: Or with more potent voice, and magic song, Moving the realms beneath: the yawning tomb Gives up its dead, and hell, with all her pow'rs, Trembling obeys the dreadful spell. And now their banners wave by Isis' fount. They pitch their tents. There to the mighty Thames, With sacred incense, and libations due, And offer'd hecatombs, their vows are paid.

Slow move along the ranks the white-rob'd priests, Sprinkling each warrior from the fountain pure: And with uplifted eyes, and solemn words, Pronounce the blessing of their guardian gods, Bright Venus, slaught'ring Mars, and mighty Jove, And Pallas worshipp'd by the waves of Sture,1 And great Apollo, and majestic Thames. Now sable night descends, and downy sleep Folds in his soft embrace the num'rous host: But soon the morning dawns, the trumpets sound. As when some swain, with rude unpractis'd hand, Disturbs the nation in their waxen cells, Forth swarms the troubled hive: so thick the troops Rush from their tents: the echoing plain resounds The clang of armour, and the shouts of men. And now they coast the stream, which gliding smooth Through fertile vallies, washes those fair walls Sacred to bright-hair'd Phœbus, where three springs

i Shaftesbury, near the Sture, was anciently called Caer Paladur, or the temple of Pallas.

Warm'd by his rays, with wond'rous virtues blest To chase disease and pain, involv'd in mist Smoke on the plain, and tell th' inhabitants How grateful to the god their incense burns. Two days they march. The third, Verlucio's walls Receives them wearied: but the rising sun, Again reflected from their burnish'd arms, Beholds the moving thousands. Now they pass The forest m vast, which glooms an horrid shade, The scene of future slaughter. There the Saxon Shall dye his conquering sword in British blood. There England wage with Denmark dreadful war, Now conquer'd, now triumphant; Ethelred Now bite the ground, and noble Edmund now Urge over heaps of slain his foaming steed. But when six times the sun had ting'd with gold The mountain tops, chasing the damps of night, And now, from his meridian height declin'd,

m Selwood.

Down tow'rd his western goal had shap'd his course. They fix their station by the banks of Sture. There sheath'd in arms, with thoughts of vengeance fir'd, They found the gather'd pow'rs of Deunan's vales, That dwell by Tamar's stream, and pleasant Teave, Adorn'd with waving woods, where noble Orgar In after days, entranc'd in holy vision, Convers'd with heav'n; and where the Plym, now join'd With rushing Tamar, meets the ocean's foam. Oft on the margin of the flood, the Seer, Rapt in prophetic ecstasy, beheld Its future glories: lofty structures rise; And on the heaving waves ride the huge bulk Of mighty ships, of form unknown, and stor'd With engines horrible, to shake beneath The caverns of the deep with thunder's voice, And awe with lightnings dread the subject sea. Or to his wond'ring eyes confest appear'd The awful form of Drake, on his designs Intent; on whose majestic brow were seen

Deep thought and firm resolve; and at his feet Proud Spain lies prostrate; Mexico pours forth Her wealth; and rich Peru her victor owns; While eastern monarchs to the hero's fame Pay willing homage. Next, from Armè's vales. And those fair fields which fruitful Aune divides, Where high Saint Michael's overlooks the main, Appear the warlike youth. And where the Dart, Through his bleak mountains and his craggy rocks, Black with loud tempests, while the rushing torrent Defiles his waters with the soil impure Of heathy moor, rolls his indignant course: Or, ling'ring now amidst his flow'ry meads, Shaded with woods, with fragrant myrtle grac'd, Smooth-gliding, and reluctant seeks the sea. From Tinga, where the fear-struck Saxon first Beheld the fierce invaders,n issuing forth

n The Danes first landed at Tinmouth; and the French, after the action off Beachy-Head, burnt the town and some fishing vessels in the harbour.

From their black ships, and their portentous standard, The magic Raven, beat the troubled air: And where, in later days, vain-glorious France Snatch'd a short triumph, soon to mourn in blood, When on her stormy coast the British cross Wav'd terrible, (the war brave Russell led,) And her proud navies in her havens flam'd. From Isca's banks, where the full river rolls, With all his tributary waters swell'd, And Moridunum sees her subject stream Mix with the boundless sea, the martial bands Advance. But from fair Mula's winding course, From Isca's northern waves and Tavia's shores. And that high promontory, which repels The foaming tempests of th' Hibernian sea, Nam'd, from th' immortal son of thund'ring Jove, The Point of Hercules, no warriors came. These with incursion swift, and vantage strong, The foe possest, and crush'd the rising war. Nor with less ardour from the blissful seats,

Where, softly-breathing from the neighbouring main,
Reigns the warm breeze; o where laughing Summer
spreads

Perpetual joy, and gaily sporting throws, With lavish hand, her rosy fragrance round, While Winter frowns in vain, the youth appears. From the swift Parrett they, and fruitful Thone, And that cloud-piercing hill, the future theme Of many a bard; but yet unknown to fame Were Arthur's noble knights, and Arthur's deeds. Six valiant chiefs the hardy bands obey'd: Assaracus, whose name proclaims his race Deriv'd from sacred Troy. To Britain's shore He came with Brutus. On his manly limbs The scars of many an honourable wound Appear'd. Though age had silver'd o'er his hair, Vig'rous he seem'd, and in his sinewy grasp Brandish'd a pond'rous spear: before his host

Somersetshire has been said to have its name from the mildness of the air, the land of Summer.

Erect and firm he march'd; his armour rang. With him his youthful son Choræbus came. Such Paris issued from the Scæan gate, When, rous'd at length to daring deeds of arms By Hector's just reproof, and Hector's fame, Exulting Troy the graceful chief beheld. Next Butes stood: skill'd with unerring aim To launch the jav'lin from his nervous arm. Achates next; and, matchless in the race, Chaonian Pandrasus. Ere horrid war Shook with his dire alarms th' astonish'd land, In Avalon's p fair isle the hero dwelt: Fair isle, fit emblem of his gen'rous mind. For there the bounteous earth spontaneous gave Her treasures forth. The blest inhabitant, Reclin'd in od'rous shades, and in the ear Of yielding virgin whisp'ring tales of love, Inhal'd the smell of flow'rs, the violet,

P The isle of Avalon is said, in old authors, to produce fruits all the year round, and corn, &c. without culture.

The cowslip, which the Fairy empress loves, And the soft blushing rose; with ev'ry sweet Which wanton Zephyr from the teeming earth Wins by his warm caresses. All combin'd, Invade the sense; for there perpetual Spring, With Summer join'd, holds through the laughing year Delightful empire; each luxuriant bough Bends with Hesperian fruit, and courts the hand; While the fair blossom to the ravish'd eye Foretells the rich succession. Uther next, Uther, the bravest of Loëgria's chiefs, Advanc'd his giant limbs: great Uther, first In dang'rous fight, in peace the just and good. Awful the hero stood, by fate design'd The mighty father of a line of kings, Of great Pendragon, and his greater son. But Deunan's warriors noble Turon led, And hardy Malim of Phœnician race, And sage Mempricius, whose deep-furrow'd brow, Thinly o'erspread with hoary hair, confest

The force of eighty winters. His weak arm No longer lifts the spear, and swells the tide Of slaughter; but in council wise, and skill'd In all the stratagems of various war, He guides more vig'rous youth to fair success. From Ellandunum, and the fruitful shore Of smooth Antona, and the plain where now Fair Sarisburia's lofty spires arise; From strong Verlucio's walls with turrets crown'd, (Verlucio, seated by the gliding stream, Amidst whose fields, with waving harvests gay, Fair Plenty moves rejoicing,) Amber led, In equal arms with godlike Dares join'd, And equal sway, their yet unconquer'd bands. Frome's rapid wave, and Durnovaria's walls, And Vindogladia, and Alaunus' stream, Send Durius, Leucon, Attys to the war. The noble Durius in the field of death Wields the strong lance, and rears the sey'nfold shield. Leucon and Attys speed the flying dart, VOL. II.

Or hurl destruction from the distant sling. An hundred chiefs with princely Locrine came, For dauntless courage fam'd, and martial skill. But far the bravest, Galgacus was there, And Ilus, sprung from great Æneas' line; And Polydorus, of Achæan race, Son of Euryalus, whom toils of war Together borne, and hardy deeds achiev'd, Had bound the friend of Brutus. When the chief Unfurl'd his venturous sails, Euryalus Forsook his native Greece, and with him led His blooming Polydorus. O'er the rest Hence was the hero grac'd in Locrine's court With every honour. To his warm embrace The Monarch gave the charms of Imogen, His lovely sister; who now bath'd in tears Laments her absent lord, or shrieking starts From broken slumbers, and ill-boding dreams, Dimly foreshewing future misery.

And now the heralds to the royal tent

Summon Loëgria's leaders. Ev'ry chief Assumes his place. High in the midst, the king Superior sits enthron'd. Then Turon rose, And, turning to the bold Deunanian chiefs, Thus spoke his ardent soul. "At length, my friends, Mars hears our pray'rs, and aids our just revenge. Oh, with what anguish, when the fierce invader Seiz'd our defenceless frontier, trusted weakly To solemn treaties and Cornubian faith, We saw our wealth, our cultivated plains Seiz'd by th' insulting foe; our towns in flames; The sacred temples of our gods profan'd With impious violation! Then we wept Upon our useless arms, which should have stream'd With hostile blood, and with reluctant step Before th' innumerous foe retir'd, not fled. At length Loëgria's chiefs appear in arms. Hear then my sentence, warriors. With the dawn Seek we the foe. I brook disgrace no more." He ceas'd. Then rising slow, the king extends

His scepter'd hand, and thus dissembling speaks: "This graceful ardour, Turon, well beseems Thy vigorous years, and fits thy fame in arms. Me too the voice of honourable praise Delights: I kindle at the sound of war. But ever should the ear of kings be clos'd Against the syren Glory: then most happy, Then greatest, when, by their paternal care Preserv'd, their people bless their peaceful reign. Hear then our just resolve. If thirst of wealth Inflame the fierce Cornubian, and provoke His hostile inroad on our country's peace; Wealth I have store. Within my spacious hall Spoils upon spoils in glitt'ring order pil'd, From bleeding Greece, or from the boastful Gaul, Torn in the bloody conflict, when the might Of Brutus foil'd their brayest: nor alone The spoils by Brutus won, my sword achiev'd No vulgar trophies, when the Scythian chief Bow'd in the dust his warlike head. All these

Freely your king shall give, and more than these, Resign his martial fame, to purchase peace, And from his people turn the rage of war. But who our offer to the foe shall bear? Will great Assaracus, in arms renown'd? Or sage Mempricius, from whose honied tongue Persuasion flows?" He ended. With a frown The stern Assaracus thus answer'd fierce, And shook the hoary honours of his head. "To others, king, commit th' ungrateful task: If in the numerous host a slave be found So poor of soul, so lost to sense of shame. Degenerate prince! Not thus our noble sires Su'd to confed'rate Greece; but with bold arms Repell'd her fierce assault, and ten long years Maintain'd the doubtful war with adverse heav'n. Shall we, Loëgria's gather'd strength in arms, Purchase precarious safety, and belie Our honourable scars? Go thou, base prince! Go ransom that unwarlike head, while we

By hardy daring, and illustrious deeds, Assert our ancient fame!" As when the gale Slow rising, first invades the rustling leaves; Now scarcely heard, now loud, and louder still Swells on the ear the sullen sound, prophetic Of the swift-rushing tempest: as he spoke So rose th' indignant murmur. Ev'ry chief Darts on the king his angry eyes. With joy He marks their warlike ardour. Now arose The hoary sage Mempricius, and at once In mute attention all was hush'd around, While thus experienc'd age discerning spoke. "Blest is the monarch of the brave and free. His throne is fix'd secure, and Fame for him The laurel wreath prepares, th' immortal verse: And blest the people, whom a prince commands In action valiant, and in council wise. These eyes, oh king, have seen thy crested helm Flame like a meteor foremost in the war, While, like the pestilence, thy dreadful sword

Made armies fall. I wish'd my years renew'd To emulate thy daring. Yet methought Our youth, by thy example fir'd, display'd Their fathers' spirit, and thy soaring flight With no unequal wing pursu'd. They burn With thirst of glory, and demand the war. Ev'n hoary age beneath the pond'rous casque Has crush'd his furrow'd brow. Shall coward fear, Thought of precarious peace, and purchas'd safety, Possess Loëgria, when Fame sounds th' alarm, And Locrine leads the battle? Monarch, no. Prove in the field our faith. Yet hear my counsel. Pallas inspires my tongue. From Humber's stream, The winding course of Trent, and where the Thames Rolls his full tribute to the eastern main; Ten thousand warriors by Elanius led, Morindus, Elidurus, and the might Of Britomarus, now with rapid march Advance; and ere six times the sun has dipp'd

His flaming axle in the western wave, Their friendly banners, and their glitt'ring arms, Shall greet our eyes. Let some illustrious chief, Of high command, in solemn embassy Approach Cornubia's leaders, thence to note Their posture, strength, and number; (to prevail By fraud or force, alike is victory,) The cause of their fierce inroad to demand; And with fair shew of words, and specious gloss, Or else with terms allure, and proffer'd treaty, To some suspense of war. So may our vengeance Pour on their heads inevitable ruin." Thus spake the wily chief. The king approv'd. Mempricius, Malim, Galgacus, receive The royal mandate. To the hostile camp They bend their course: the heralds march before, Beyond the hills of Mendip, where the soil The grass nutritious, and the fragrant herb, Yields rarely, but the ore of useful lead

Repays with wealth immense the searchers toil; And the fam'd cavern, q from whose mouth the voice Of Fate oft speaks in thunder, or compell'd With mystic rites, and spells of dreadful pow'r, The regions of the gloomy dead give up Their dreadful secrets, had Cornubia pass'd, Vainly presumptuous, deeming to surprize With swift incursion, in his secret bower By Avon, and the stream to future times By Sabra's fate renown'd, th' unguarded king. But now the scouts report, the gather'd pow'rs From Tamar to Alaunus, by the wave Of Sture encamp'd, and Locrine's rapid march. Cornubia's chief, Belinus, to Corineus By kindred race allied, by friendship more; Straight gives command, and with converted ensigns The host moves onward, with impetuous course. And now Ebrancus to the right his station

<sup>9</sup> Okey Hole.

Fixes against the stream, which winding flows By sacred Glastonbury, and the isle Of fabled Avalon, and seeks the sea. Hymner, Vigenius, Elidaucus, plant Their banners on the left, where its dark shade The forest spreads. The middle space the bands By Danius, Lago, and Molmutius led; And those which under brave Rudaucus came; Andragius, Urianus, and the strength Of Brennus, fam'd for many an hardy deed, Possess'd. With these in arms the marshal'd pow'rs Of Capis, Ænus, and Bleduno join. Catellus, and Gerontius, Leoline By Pallas lov'd, the prudent and the brave. And young Sisilius, whose well-practis'd limbs Oft on the sand the sinewy wrestler foil'd. And huge Gorbodion, fam'd for brutal strength, But headstrong, fierce, inexorable: war

F Selwood.

His sole delight, to cruel deeds inur'd. Maglaunus, Peridurus: one on foot Shakes in the foremost rank his mighty spear, While two proud coursers, like the winds in speed, Whirl bold Maglaunus o'er th' ensanguin'd plain, Thron'd in the glitt'ring car. Now great Belinus Darts o'er the growing camp his watchful eye, And bids his legions round the vast extent Raise the high rampart. In the trench profound, Compell'd from his accustom'd bed, the stream Reluctant flows. Each to his several post The stated guards repair, and in six bands Six valiant chiefs obey: Gorbodion, Capys, Vigenius, Lago, godlike Leoline, And Elidaucus, gay with golden arms.

And now Loëgria's embassy approach'd

Where Leoline held watch. The chief, who saw

The heralds' holy ensigns, and the troop

Few and unarm'd, springs from the mound, and bids

Unbar the massy gates; then mildly thus:

"Whoe'er ye be, that thus in friendly guise Approach our lines, by holy heralds led; Fearless advance, and freely speak your purpose. Dear to the gods, who see with pitying eyes Man's wretched race, as emulous of woe, Rushing with frantic rage to mutual slaughter, Ye come, perhaps, the messengers of peace." Mempricius thus replies. "Yes, generous chief, Whose prudent words bespeak a noble mind, We come, indeed, the messengers of peace, From kingly Locrine, whose paternal eye Grieving beholds the ills which threat his people. Then lead us to Belinus, and convene Cornubia's heroes, that th' assembled council May learn our monarch's worth, and war no more To impious fury urge our kindred swords." He ended. Leoline thus answer'd glad. "Whate'er thy message, be it peace or war, We know, and we respect the sacred laws Which heav'n prescribes the nations. Of safe conduct, And all observance meet, proceed secure. If peace thou bring'st, most welcome: for we draw The sword of justice, not of wild ambition." So saying, on he march'd: Loëgria's heroes Pursue his steps. The great Belinus now Summons the leaders. His capacious tent Receives the warlike train. High-thron'd o'er all Appears their injur'd queen, and by her side Her blooming son. In royal state she sate; For since Persephone's relentless power Extinguish'd great Corineus' noble life, To her, his daughter, and her youthful Madan, His people vow'd their homage. Next the throne Belinus stood: the rest in order round. Loëgria's chiefs advance: Mempricius thus With studied speech the purpos'd fraud pursues. "Princes, and leaders of Cornubia's pow'rs, And thou great queen, before whose awful throne We bow submissive: may th' immortal gods, Upon whose nod the fates of empire wait,

And kingdoms rise or fall, give to our words Persuasion's winning charms; those charms which smooth The brow of wrath, and of his cruel purpose Beguile revenge! so may impartial reason Decide between us, and the scourge of war Pass from the nations! War, remorseless power, Furious and blind, as violence or chance Impels, the palm bestows; and on the ground Humbling the just, bids pride and falsehood rise On conquest's eagle pinion. But unblam'd May we declare our message, and against The throned state of sov'reign majesty Urge our bold charge, as sacred justice bids? Conscious of right, to you, illustrious chiefs, The king submits his cause." Belinus then: " Not urg'd by lust of war, nor blind obedience To pow'r superior, sheath'd in arms we stand; But foes to lawless force, and proud oppression. Patient we hearken to thy pleaded reason." Mempricius now resumes. "Thus Locrine bids.

Say to-Cornubia, o'er our peaceful realm Why have your threat'ning armies pour'd dismay? If we have exil'd from our throne and bed The haughty Guendolen, our kingly pow'r Might well, dependent on no foreign state, Refuse th' account; but mov'd by love of peace, And arm'd by justice, we provoke the trial. Stand forth that guilty woman, whose vile arts With spells, and dark conspiracy, assail'd Her husband's throne and life. Before Cornubia Our proofs produc'd shall vouch the charge: submission, If lightly urg'd, atone. Or will she dare, By white-rob'd priests in solemn order led, Approach the charmed rock, which from its base Self-mov'd inclines, when truth is near, and heav'n To witness call? Till then suspend the war." Mempricius ceas'd; and thus the queen replied, While from her eyes insulted innocence Flash'd lightnings. "Yes, we court the awful trial. Connubial Juno, hear! hear, mighty Jove!

Hear, righteous Themis! for you know my truth. If without murmur, while my swelling heart Almost to bursting throbb'd with anguish keen, To have sustain'd my wrongs: if to have wept My lonely nights upon a widow'd bed, Yet taught my languid cheek to wear a smile When next we met, though cold aversion scowl'd Upon his alter'd brow: if to have waited With fondest love and most attentive duty Upon his will, and hop'd by patient bearing To win upon his heart, and move his pity: If this be dark conspiracy, if this Be proud rebellion, I indeed am guilty. Alas! and what has been the meed of patience? Repeated insult, hard, unfeeling insult. And, when exhausted cruelty supplied No fiercer torture, last, disgraceful exile And sland'rous accusation." More, in grief And bitterness of soul, she would have said; When brave Ebrancus, starting from the crowd,

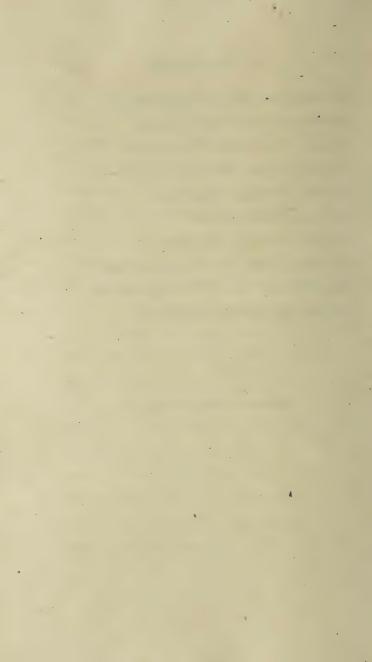
Thus spoke indignant: "Mighty queen, forbear. We know thy virtues, and the tyrant's guilt. Ev'n now, while here his solemn embassy Mocks us with promise fair, and shew of peace, And dares invoke th' immortal gods to witness: His impious arts, his base dissimulation, Those injur'd gods detect. The fraud is plain. And does he deem us then so weak of mind, Such easy novices, that, sooth'd by words, We shall unbrace our armour, and lay by Our righteous swords, which sacred justice draws? Suspend the war? What, till th' extended realm Which owns his sway, from all her provinces Pours forth her armed sons to fight his battles? No, let Cornubia back return defiance, And hostile scorn. Ev'n now, our spies report, Ten thousand warriors from their northern confines, From Medway's banks, and Thames' majestic wave, Urge their swift march. Retire, Loëgrian chiefs, Your arts avail not. On your camp we pour VOL, II.

Instant the vengeance of our injur'd queen, If great Belinus give our fury way." Ebrancus thus. Belinus thus replied: "Well hast thou spoke, chief of Cornubian heroes, Still first in action, still in council wise. Mempricius, tell your king, his shallow arts Protect his guilt no more, but by his sword His safety must be purchas'd. Thy weak age May need refreshment. Venerable man, Enter our tent, and share the genial feast, Thou and thy brave companions. Many a chief To-morrow gluts the rage of sanguine war. Then we may meet as foes. To-night at least Accept the honours due to age and thee." "No; to the king," the hoary warrior said, "We bear thy answer; what the morn shall bring We mourn, but fear not." Now the council rose. Through all th' extended camp the troops indulge The banquet, till the shades of night descend. Not so the mournful Guendolen. Retir'd,

Now flow her sorrows, now uncheck'd burst forth Her sighs. Grief in her heaving bosom reigns Despotic, nor admits divided sway. And as from vernal skies the sudden show'r Descends; or when beneath stern winter's reign, All white with hoary frost, stands some old oak, The monarch of the woods; touch'd by the beam Of Phæbus, from th' innumerous boughs distils The copious moisture: down her faded cheek So tear succeeding tear incessant stream'd. " Alas!" she cried, " and shall the rising sun See hostile nations in fierce conflict join, And the pure stream run purple with the blood Of heroes, in my fatal quarrel slain? Can love be won by cruel deeds of arms? Can war's fell power rekindle soft desire? Loathing I turn from the detested scene. Oh be my witness, heaven! that not to me Revenge is dear. For thee, for thee, my Locrine, Though false, yet lov'd, pleas'd would I yield my life. But love and hope to me are lost for ever. Me, wretched widow! Yet my husband lives, Oh depth of misery! he lives another's. Oh when shall I find refuge in the grave? When close my weary eyes in death? In death We know no grief, no pangs of slighted love." Then, as she press'd to her maternal bosom Her darling son, who, by her anguish mov'd, Now join'd his tears with her's, "Alas! my child, Robb'd of thy birthright, thou art exil'd too. Oh boy, thou might'st have been a glorious king. Who shall protect thee now? Thy cruel father, Thy father is thy foe: and a vile Scythian Upon the throne of Brutus (thine, my child,) Shall sit, and mock thy suff'rings. Oh, for thee, For thee alone I live; and but for thee, Consign'd for ever to th' oblivious tomb, My vengeance and my woes had slept together." Her thus complaining, pitying heav'n beholds, Beholds, and on her aching temples sheds

The healing dew of sleep; for wearied now
Nature no more sustains her toil, but sinks
Exhausted. On the couch her graceful limbs
Are stretch'd supine. Meanwhile her spirit free
Expatiates, led by gods, in fields of air,
And in ecstatic vision dimly sees
The glories of her race—a line of kings
From Madan sprung. Now the warm ray of hope
Plays on her breast, and midst her peaceful slumbers
The smile of joy her languid cheek illumes.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.



THE

### REVENGE

OF

# GUENDOLEN.

BOOK III.

THE Incantation, the Banquet. The Song of the Bard.

### REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

#### BOOK III.

MEANWHILE despairing on her sleepless couch Estrildis lies, and tears her cheeks bedew.

Forc'd from her head, the regal ornaments

Now soil their glitt'ring beauties in the dust,

And oft she smites her breast, and tears her hair,

And now the justice of the gods arraigns,

And now implores their mercy; but stern fate,

Her wild reproaches, and her fruitless pray'rs,

Scatters in empty air. Th' attendant train

Partake her sorrows, and the vaulted roof,

Vocal with song no more, or jocund sound

Of wanton revel, rings with loud lament.

Ev'n Boarex, absorb'd in sullen grief, Sits silent, and her baffled art deplores. As when, of some proud city, girt with siege, The forceful engine, or slow-working sap, Has shook the lofty rampart, which now bows From its foundations, now with thund'ring sound Spreads wide its massy ruins: streets appear Fair opening, rich, with glitt'ring fanes adorn'd, And pillar'd domes, and fire the fierce assailants With the near view of plunder. Here a band, Pale with disease, and worn with toil, extend Their feeble spears; despair is all their strength; But far within, a lamentable train, The timid virgin, and the widow'd matron, And feeble age, and helpless infancy, Cling to the altars, piercing oft the air, Responsive to the dreadful notes without, With fearful shrieks, as near, and now more near The victors' shout, and dying groans arise. Such was the general woe. For hope no more

Dispens'd her sweet illusions. Dark despair, And sacred horror ev'ry bosom fill'd, Since that sad hour, when flush'd with expectation, The eager step of fair Estrildis sought The solemn grove, where Scythian Boarex Adjur'd with mystic verse th' infernal pow'rs. 'Twas when the silent night in shadowy veil Had wrapp'd the face of nature: softly sigh'd The western breeze, responsive to the strain Of the lorn nightingale: in cloudless majesty, Amidst her starry train, the queen of night Pursu'd her course rejoicing; shedding soft Her silv'ry light on hill and grove: the earth Blesses her gentle sway; and every herb That drinks the dew, each flow'r, and fragrant shrub. With grateful incense scents the passing air. Then Boarex, th' impatient fair address'd. "Behold, the season calls us. Now the pow'rs, Propitious most, to mortal pray'rs attend. Seek we the deep recesses of the grove,

There learn the will of fate." She said; Estrildis Replied not, but with hasty step advanc'd, And beating heart. But ere the rites began, Thus, as she pensive at the altar stood, The mistress of the spell address'd the queen. "Oh daughter, now with courage arm thy soul: For dreadful are the rites; dreadful the gods; Horrid their gloomy dwelling. The weak sense Of mortals the dire vision scarce sustains." Then rais'd her magic wand, and with fix'd eye Intent, mutter'd the mystic verse, and trac'd Upon the yielding sand the pow'rful spell. And now the altars blaze, and now begins The sacrifice, to earth, to night, and hell. Strange, bloody, horrible! whence nature starts Shudd'ring, nor dares the trembling Muse relate; Less dreadful that Thyestean banquet, where The sun recoil'd affrighted, measuring back His heav'nly journey. Sinking with her fears, Half dead, Estrildis stood, and with both hands

Press'd to her eyes the veil. The lab'ring moon Grows pale and dim; the stars retire; and now The blast howls dismal: now the gather'd clouds Roll on their gloomy volumes: darkness shrouds The earth, and heaven's blue vault appears no more. Such horrid darkness, when the hour is near, Shall to the nations of the world foretell The wreck of nature. Now the lightnings glare Frequent: now rolls the thunder: peals on peals Redoubled roar: trembles the solid earth. The sorc'ress midst the tempest stands unmov'd, And waves her wand, and chants the dreadful charm. Now shakes the forest: now the lofty oak Bows in the dust his head: the mountain nods With all his rocks, and all his torrents hurls A deluge on the plain: the rocking ground Is mov'd beneath, as when the force of winds Heaves the vast bosom of the mighty deep: The cleft earth yawns, and from the dreadful chasm, Burst flames: now horrid shrieks are heard, the yell

Of torture: now appears the drear abode Of Hela, the dark mansions of the dead. There all the dreadful ministers of vengeance; Fierce slaughter, dropping blood; disease and pain; There discord, there the furies, there revenge; There jealousy, terrific spectre! there Pale famine's meagre form; with fell despair; And there the dreadful deities, who weave The fatal web, of human entrails made; The web of victory: the weights below The heads of gasping warriors. Streaming blood Smokes on the fiery soil beneath. They ply Their horrid toil incessant, hymning still Terrific strains, that doom the death of heroes. Dire was their aspect: not portentous Gorgon More dismal frown'd. Undaunted, fearless yet, Confiding in her charms, the Scythian cries, "Obey, ye gloomy pow'rs, obey the spell!

s The Valkyriur, or Chusers of the slain. See Gray's Poems.

Give victory!" Now deeper thunders roll'd:

Hell grew more dreadful: bickering flames shot forth,

Wreath'd with dark clouds of smoke. Then first

The sorceress knew fear: and then a voice,

More loud than shouting armies, or the roar

Of the vext seas, with rushing storms combin'd,

Broke on her ear. "Oh insolent and vain!

Shall mortals then prescribe the course of fate?

Thou who would'st pierce the secrets of the gods,

Hear thou, and tremble. Miserable wretch,

What is thy boasted art? Their instrument,

To work their firm, inscrutable decrees.

The meek and humble mind the fav'ring pow'rs

Well-pleas'd behold. Rebellious arrogance

At length their thunder visits. Seek no more

What known will curse thee. The dread pow'rs of hell

What force can bind? what pray'rs or tears can move?"

Terrific Mista spoke, and at her voice

Hell shakes, and earth and heav'n recoil dismay'd.

Now fled the horrid vision. The rude storm

Is hush'd: no more the thunder rolls: the stream Glides in its wonted bed; and the fair moon, With all her starry train, again shines forth. Again the soft-complaining nightingale Breathes heav'nly music on the ear of night. But prone on earth the miserable queen, Pale, motionless, almost of sense bereav'd, Lay chill'd with terror; when with trembling step, And fault'ring tongue, sad Boarex approach'd, She rais'd the mourner's head, and fondly tried (Though from her breast unbidden burst the sigh, And oft the starting tear was check'd in vain,) With soothing words to chear her fainting soul. "Daughter, restrain thy sorrows," (thus she cried,) "The spell has lost its force, but the dread gods, Mov'd by the voice of pray'r, and milder rites, Perhaps will bend relenting. Heard'st thou not That awful voice-' The meek and humble mind 'The pow'rs well-pleas'd behold?' Approach we then Suppliant the altar; groveling on the ground,

Wetting the earth with tears, with frequent sighs Moving the air, and beat our wretched breasts, And rend our scatter'd hair. No other hope, No other refuge now remains, if pray'rs, And tears, and sighs, are pour'd to heav'n in vain." She said, and with disorder'd step and look Mov'd to the altar, which her hands so late With impious rites, and horrid sacrifice, Polluted, and with pure ablutions cleans'd From blood; then heap'd with incense, and applied The fire. Now rolling in the dust, she pray'd, She wept: Estrildis answer'd groan for groan, And clasp'd her hands in speechless agony, And beat her breast, and rent her scatter'd hair. And pray'd, and wept, and sigh'd. But tears, and pray'rs, And sighs, are pour'd in vain. The struggling flame Sinks down, and now involv'd in smoke expires. Signs from above ensu'd, earth groan'd beneath, Blue lightnings gleam'd, and thunder shook the sky. Then vanish'd every hope: then silent grief,

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And black despair's impenetrable gloom, Possess'd them whole. With feeble step, and slow, They quit the fatal place. Th' attendant train Behold amaz'd their alter'd looks, that shone So late with airy hope, and festive joy, Nor dare the cause explore. Now all around That favour'd bow'r, where nature vied with art, Where Cupids sported in each balmy breeze, And pleasure led the jocund hours along, Pale sorrow reigns, and shrieks are heard of woe. As some fond mother, o'er her darling child, (When now the pale consumption on its youth Untimely preys, and the worn lungs refuse-Their office) hangs in speechless agony, Marking the slow approach of death; and now Bathes its wan cheek with tears; on its pale lips Prints kisses; and if chance a transient glow The flushing fever spreads, her eager hope Deems it the promise of returning health: But soon the fond delusive hope expires;

Tears stream afresh; and with more dreadful sway

Despair again comes rushing on her soul.

So mourn'd Estrildis for her vanish'd joys,

And with such horrors view'd impending fate.

Loëgria's envoys now had reach'd their camp, And to their king announc'd approaching war. Then rose th' undaunted chief, and forth he mov'd Majestic. In his hand the sceptre shone, Ensign of high command, and from his helm, Dreadful with nodding plumes, quick lightnings flash'd. Earth shook beneath him. At his word, the sound Of clanging trumpets bids the troops repair Each to his standard. Now the echoing plain, Throng'd with the moving thousands, seems on fire: So thick the polish'd helms, and blazing shields Reflect the sun's declining rays. He mounts His high tribunal, thence awhile surveys The host, then awful rises. On their king They gaze with wond'ring eyes. He seems a god. As when the father of the tuneful strain,

Sprung from the Muse, whom all the Muse inspir'd, Threician Orpheus, on the rugged brow Of Rhodope or Hæmus first appear'd: By thousands and ten thousands, from their caves, And gloomy forests, the rude nations flock'd, With fond devotion to the moral lay Attentive, while their bosoms catch the flame Of virtue, till that hour unknown to man: Not with less awe Loëgria's armed sons Gaze on their chief, and from his eagle eye, And bold demeanour, in their kindling souls Imbibe heroic ardour. "Warlike chiefs, Support and glory of Loëgria's throne, (The king exclaims,) these firm, well-order'd ranks, Their prompt obedience, and their eager zeal, Proclaim your martial skill, your faith unshaken. To sheath the ruthless sword of civil slaughter, To spare my people, with paternal care In vain I strove. Insatiable ambition, And lawless force, nor nature's sacred ties

Restrain, nor pleaded justice. Fierce Cornubia Points at a kindred breast the guilty steel. I fondly hop'd to have reserv'd your fire For nobler deeds. O'er other worlds to spread Our Trojan name, with other trophies grac'd. Not so the gods decree. No more I check Your ardour. Let the morning's orient beam Play on your armour, moving to the fight. Brave must he be, and of no vulgar force, To whom your chief shall yield the prize of fame. There, where the plumage of my crested helm Shakes o'er the breaking squadrons wild dismay, There fix your eyes; be that your guiding star, Secure it leads to conquest and to fame." He ceas'd. From man to man, from rank to rank, Spreads swift applause: a murm'ring sound arose, Like billows breaking on the distant shore, Or winds that sing along the narrow vale, By two cloud-piercing mountains form'd, whose sides Rugged with rocks, and dark with woods, appear

To threaten fierce encounter. Now the leaders, Approaching, hear the king's command. The troops Divide: these marching to their tents prepare Their evening banquet. Their allotted posts, From space to space, along th' extended rampart, The guards possess. Of these a chosen band, By Dares, Leucon, Ilus, chiefs of name, Conducted, far beyond the trench encamp, And spread their watchful scouts around, to mark The foe, if in their guarded tents they pass The hours of night, or with excursion swift Attempt surprize. But in the royal tent The leaders meet. Meanwhile th' attendant train With dainties heap the board; the golden bowl Foams with the generous wine; to Jove they pour Libation, and indulge the genial feast: Nor wanted tuneful harp, nor sacred song. Above the rest the tuneful bard appears. He sung the noble deeds of other days, The glory of their fathers. Fix'd around

In mute attention sate the kindling heroes; And as the mighty master touch'd the lyre, Their glowing bosoms heave with thirst of praise. From sacred Troy the lofty strain began, When fierce Minerva wrapp'd her walls in flames. And next he sang, whom Juno's wrath pursu'd,t Unnumber'd perils destin'd to sustain, Now tost by tempests, now by arms assail'd; Till, led by fate to Latium's promis'd shore, Th' Ausonian bride his finish'd toil rewards. But when the sire of gods, by Venus mov'd, In the blest synod of th' eternal pow'rs, Receiv'd the favour'd hero, (where he sits With great Alcides, Jove's all-conqu'ring son, Grac'd with immortal youth,) Ascanius fill'd The Latian throne. And now the poet sung Silvius, enamour'd of the beauteous dame. The beauteous dame deriv'd her race divine

t Æneas.

From Faunus, long in Latian realms ador'd, And hoary Saturn, Jove's immortal sire. They lov'd in secret, till her swelling waist Their stolen joys betray'd. Then prophets sung Portentous strains. At length, foredoom'd the bane Of those who gave him life, a guiltless parricide, Sprung into light the fatal babe. Amidst Lucina's throes the mother dies; the sire, Pierc'd in the silven chace, distains with blood His son's keen arrow, by the furies turn'd Wide from its aim. For this disastrous deed The son, ill-fated, fled th' Ausonian reign, And roam'd an exile in a foreign land, In far Chaonia. There, by thirst of fame Impell'd, and fir'd to high, heroic deeds, He glean'd the relics of the Trojan name, And shook astonish'd Greece with dire alarms. Thence led by heav'n his vent'rous sails unfurl'd, And prest the bosom of the stormy deep, A new Æneas. Now with daring prow,

Full of the god, he stems the raging wave; Now dyes with hostile blood th' Iberian strand; Now proud with Gallic spoils. At length appears The western isle, the period of his toils: For thus from Leogecia's holy fane, (Fair Leogecia, once to Cynthia dear, Till, rous'd to vengeance by an impious race, She whelm'd the bloomy region in the main.) The virgin huntress spoke the will of fate: " Amidst the western waves, an isle explore, There fix thy empire, Brutus, and thy name. There through futurity's dim mists I see A mighty nation, great in arts and arms; O'ercome by whose transcendent glory, fades The promis'd lustre of the Roman name. Hail, happy Britain! hail, belov'd of heav'n! Immortal mother of the brave and free!" Thus spoke the goddess of the fatal bow; Nor were her oracles believ'd in vain: For as the fleet approach'd the destin'd shore,

The winds were hush'd, and every heaving wave Subsided. Mov'd by some superior pow'r. (As if the genius of the land confess'd Its future lords) the prows divide the deep, Nor urg'd by sounding oar nor swelling sail. Then fierce Bellona shakes her flaming brand, And dreadful deeds are done. In horrent arms Stood the proud foe: their stature reach'd the sky. Not that Titanian race more fell, who heap'd Pelion on Ossa, and defy'd the highest. Then rush to war the martial race of Troy; There great Assaracus, brave Turon there, And there Corineus wields his fatal lance: There Brutus like a god appears; and now Directs the storm, and marks the course of death; Now lifts his mighty arm, and hurls his thunder. The savage foe fled howling to their hills, And trembled in their rocky caves. Their hills, Their rocky caves are storm'd; nor more secure The forests' gloomy depth. Fair peace at length

Receives the warriors in her soft embrace, And Ceres crowns their fields. Another Troy Now rises, empress of the western world. Her lofty structures, and her glitt'ring fanes, The mighty stream, that rolls majestic by, Surveys, exulting in his future fame. But now the bard awakens all his fires, And sweeps with bolder rage the sounding strings; Invokes the Muse to aid his daring song, And feels the goddess present at his call. With glowing bosom, and with sparkling eyes. The monarch listen'd to the lofty strain. He sung the hero of the frozen north. Now pouring dreadful from a thousand ships His savage warriors on Albania's shore. How fierce the conflict, by the foaming main, When Britain fled, and Albanact expir'd! Mount, haughty Scythian, mount thy lofty decks. And spread each canvas to the fav'ring gale. Behold, he comes, the great avenger comes,

Like Phœbus, dreadful with his silver bow, When from Olympus, clad in gloomy night, Fierce he descends, and blasts the guilty world With pestilence. Now swells the shout of war. The tumult thickens, and the combat burns: Mars bathes in human blood; the dismal field Is wrapp'd in darkness, and a sanguine cloud; O'er heaps of slain the foaming river roars; And Jove with thunder rends the troubled air. Fierce in the van the dreadful chief appears, Victorious Locrine, Brutus' matchless son; Through breaking ranks his furious course he drives, And slaughter'd heroes strew the plain beneath. Before him moves his brother's gloomy shade, And bares his recent wound, and points the foe. Then flies the spear, and then the mighty falls. As when some haughty chief, his foe subdu'd, The captive navy in proud triumph leads, And rashly boasts unconquerable force: Sudden the hurricane descends: the sea

Roars dreadful, and a foaming deluge hurls

Upon the bursting decks: the shatter'd ships

Yield to the storm, and the remorseless deep

Howls, closing o'er their masts: so Humber falls,

And all his boasted triumphs are no more.

In vain Estrildis for her sire's return

Prepares the grateful bath, and spreads the board;

Her sire returns not, pale and cold in death.

Thus sung the bard, and wak'd the rage of war.

Each beating bosom claim'd the promis'd fight:

Each ardent warrior grasp'd his shining shield,

And pois'd the spear, or half unsheath'd the sword;

Anxious they wish the morning's rising light,

And dreams of conquest in their fancy play.

In thought they see Cornubia's baffled pow'rs

By pale confusion seiz'd, and wild dismay,

While fierce behind incens'd Loëgria storms.

Oh blind to fate! what shades of heroes slain

The morn shall send to Pluto's dreary coasts!

How many widows mourn their slaughter'd lords,

While sad Loëgria bleeds at ev'ry vein!

Buoy'd by presumptuous pride, in vain they hope

For heav'nly aid in an unrighteous cause;

But confident in strength, nor victims slain,

Nor vows, nor pray'rs, appease the offended pow'rs.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

THE

## REVENGE

OF

## GUENDOLEN.

BOOK IV.

THE Hall of Odin. The Battle. The Truce. The Death of Locrine.

#### THE

## REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

### BOOK IV.

Now earth was wrapp'd in night, and with soft hand Sleep shed o'er human woe his balmy dew.

But where, surrounded by his vassal gods,

The mighty father of the battle sits,

In golden goblets quaffing generous wine,<sup>u</sup>

The heav'nly synod meets. The sounding hall

Unfolds her countless gates, and shakes throughout

With thronging feet, and din of clattering arms.

u Odin is thus described by the northern mythologists.

Before the throne of Odin rang'd appear The ministers of his almighty will. There stood the Destinies, whose piercing eyes The past, the present, and the future view, And, on the father's sovereign nod intent, Mark as he bids, in their eternal roll, The chequer'd course of man's eventful life. Next these, the dreadful Sisters,y they who bathe In blood, by whom the warring heroes fall. Each in her right sustain'd the pond'rous spear, And from her left the polish'd shield display'd Portentous splendor. On each gloomy brow Frown'd the fierce rage of war, the lust of slaughter; And by the side of each a lofty steed, Caparison'd and harness'd for the field, Appear'd, in colour like the solemn night, When with collected vapours wintry storms

x The name of the Nornir, or Parcæ of the northern nations, signified the past, present, and future.

y The Valkyriur, or Chusers of the slain.

Have quench'd the lunar ray, and veil'd the stars: Whose eyes shot lightnings; wreaths of curling smoke Roll'd from whose nostrils, mix'd with bickering flames; And from whose flanks a pair of mighty wings Stretch'd far their shadows, upon which upborne The sisters ride the tempest, when the sire Spreads o'er a thousand realms the waste of war. High in the midst appear'd the sovereign throne Flaming with gold, and rich with glitt'ring gems: And all around the blaze of polish'd steel, Swords, lances, shields, pour'd in exhaustless stream Unutterable splendor, to sustain Whose fierceness the frail sense of mortal sight Must fail. With honours scarce inferior grac'd, Beside the father, the majestic queen His fruitful spouse was plac'd, and next to her The thunder-bearing Thor, their conqu'ring son. On either hand, in equal ranks dispos'd, Eight golden thrones sustain'd in awful state As many deities. Now all were met,

All but the guard of that celestial fort 2 Which fronts the wond'rous bridge, whose pow'r controls Heav'n's furious foes, and awes the giant crew. Myriads of spirits of inferior class Throng in th' exterior courts, and mighty chiefs, Renown'd in arms, in glorious battle slain.a Now from the caverns of the gloomy north Rush forth the tempests. Now the vaulted roof Shakes through each vast recess, each pillar'd ile; And moving with the blast, the shields, the swords, In glitt'ring order beaming from the walls. Clash horrible. The ministers of fate Know the dire signs of Odin's wrath awak'd, Spring to their steeds, and shake their threat'ning spears. Before the throne a form majestic stands; His batter'd armour, and his riven shield

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Heimdall. The principal gods of the northern mythology were twelve in number. The giants were the perpetual enemies of the gods. See Northern Antiquities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> All who died in battle had immediate admission to the hall of Odin.

Yet stain'd with blood, proclaim his glorious toils In many a well-fought field; but on his breast Appears the semblance of a ghastly wound, And discontent frowns on his sullen brow. "How long," he cries, "is Humber doom'd to mourn? How long defrauded of his just revenge?" Then with a voice that shook the vaulted heav'n, And mov'd the firm foundations of the world, The sire of gods replies: "My son, b thy pray'r Is heard; the promis'd vengeance comes at length. Go forth, ye sisters, urge your winged steeds, And bid the dreadful goddess of the dead, The gloomy Hela, all her flames prepare, Wake all her horrors, all her furies rouse. Bid the sad subjects of her mournful reign Forget their pains awhile, to meet their guest; Such as before ne'er trod that horrid soil, One great in arms, with wreaths of conquest crown'd."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>b</sup> All the princes of the Gothic nations were fond of deriving their descent from Odin.

Swift at the word the dreadful sisters flew,
Where the nine portals of the drear abode
Arise, and, seated on her ebon throne,
The gloomy goddess reigns in dreadful pomp,
And gluts her cruel ears with cries and groans.
She hears with joy, if joy in hell can be.
The dog of darkness spreads his fangs, esets wide
His jaws, distilling foam and human blood,
And hopes the prey. The furies howl applause.

Wak'd by the circling hours, the rosy dawn
Beam'd from the glowing east. Now hell unfolds
Her gates, and, riding on the storm, rush forth
The dreadful sisters. As they move, the air
Is darken'd, and the conscious earth beneath
Shakes to its centre. Now upon the banks
Of Sture, they cease their flight, and lift their voice.
Rous'd by the thrilling sound, both armies start
From sleep, and on the echoing plain pour forth

c He fed upon the lives of those who perished by violence.

Their myriads. Helms on helms, and shields on shields, In long succession. Throng'd with glitt'ring spears The plain appears to move. As when the gale, When now rich Autumn's hand has ting'd the fields Through all their wide extent with golden hues, Sweeps o'er the rip'ning grain; now here now there Impell'd, as Zephyrus or Notus breathes, Waves quick the yielding corn; here driven on heaps The creaking blades encounter, and behind A void appears, which soon the breeze supplies. Now tumult rises; now the sound is heard Of dreadful preparation; ringing shrill The clatt'ring armour; the fierce soldiers shout; The leaders loud command; the trumpets' clang Pierces the troubled air; the scythed car Rolls o'er the plain in thunder; far and wide To right, to left, the growing ranks extend; And now appears in all its dreadful pomp The regulated war. An awful pause Ensues: terrific silence! Ev'ry breast

Glowing with martial fury pants for battle. Frowning they stand, impatient for the signal, Like hounds, whom, vers'd in every silvan art, Some huntsman to the furzy brake conducts, The haunt well known of their accustom'd game: Now at the covert's verge, their glowing eyes Flash lightnings, and their bristling hair erect Speaks their tumultuous joy: their lashing tails Beat on their panting sides: they tread in air, And now prepare to spring; but aw'd, repress Their fury, on their master's eye intent Gazing, and waiting his commanding voice. Before Cornubia's ranks Belinus moves, And every chief incites to noble deeds. "Warriors, be mindful of your ancient fame. Rouse all your strength, and waken all your fires. Brave is the foe. To all your triumphs past, On Gallia's plains, and proud Iberia's shore, To vanquish'd Greece, and that gigantic race Foil'd in the conflict, while they boast in vain

Their prowess more than human, this blest morn,
By heav'n with each auspicious omen grac'd,
Shall add a nobler conquest.' Silent all
Attend: their bosoms glow with generous rage.

With equal ardour in refulgent arms Loëgria's heroes drest their manly limbs. There Turon shook his formidable lance: There Ilus frown'd: there Galgacus appear'd, Proud of unnumber'd trophies: there the shield Of noble Uther on th' astonish'd foe Portentous gleam'd: there great Assaracus Surveys with practis'd eye the marshall'd files. Above the rest, with manly grace adorn'd, The monarch tow'rs, and from his glitt'ring car With eyes on fire, and thund'ring voice, awakes The ling'ring war, and pours in every breast The rage of fight, and proud contempt of death. "Warriors, at length the day ye wish'd appears. Lo! sheath'd in arms, Cornubia's hostile pow'rs! Lives there, whose soul, to shameful fear resign'd,

Shrinks from the glorious dangers of the war, And doubts to mingle where the battle burns? Hear, Jove, and Pallas! by this hand he dies: But ye whom fame's immortal glories fire, Now prove your might, and emulate your king." Then from his car, upon the sounding plain Sprung the brave chief, and rush'd against the foe. As the red meteor in the troubled air Appears, the dread forerunner of the storm; Such from his arms the dismal splendors glar'd. And as across the blue expanse of heav'n A star swift shooting darts its lengthen'd light; Such was his course, as, gathering strength to throw, The hero shook aloft his fatal spear. Now wing'd with death, he speeds the rapid dart, The point lies buried in Bleduno's breast. Prone on the ground the grasping warrior falls, And grasps with strong convulsive pangs the dust. Cornubia mourns her slaughter'd chief. At once A thousand jay'lins from a thousand hands

Rain dreadful. With extended arm the king Bears on his sounding shield the rattling storm; And presses dauntless on. And now begins The conflict: shield to shield, and lance to lance Oppos'd: now rings the batter'd armour: now The shout of fierce success, the dying groan, Mingle their horrors: now the snorting steeds O'er mangled limbs of noble warriors slain Whirl the swift car, and bathe their hoofs in blood. O'er the disastrous field, the gloomy pow'rs That guide the course of slaughter, and delight In human woe, ride on the stormy clouds, And, as the tide of conquest drives, to these, And now to these, reveal their dreadful forms. Then pale confusion, fear, and shameful flight, Seizes the bravest; then the mighty fall.

Oh say, bright parent of immortal verse!

Say, memory! what chiefs renown'd in arms

The sword of Locrine mingled with the dead.

First Lago fell; Vigenius next expir'd;

Pierc'd through the shoulder as he turns for flight, Andragius bites the ground; Molmutius next Writhes in the pangs of death, for wisdom fam'd, And skill'd with various eloquence to sooth Each stormy passion, and the fierce and proud Beneath the sway of justice teach to bow: But vain is eloquence, and wisdom vain, When ruthless war unsheaths his slaught'ring sword. His death with grief the brave Rudaucus views, Springs from the ranks, and shakes his threat'ning lance: The king beholds him, and exclaims aloud: "Wretch! dost thou dare my waken'd rage to tempt? On the cold earth Molmutius bleeding lies, Could not that arm thy lov'd companion save? Then share his fate. This mercy I bestow, My spear shall join thee with thy friend in death." While yet he speaks, the strong Cornubian lance Sings on direct. Th' impenetrable shield His left extends, and disappoints the blow: At the same instant, with no doubtful aim,

While yet Rudaucus from his flying dart Expects immortal fame, and marks its course, His right impels the jav'lin. In his groin Sudden Rudaucus feels the piercing steel. Stagg'ring he back recoils; before his eyes The shades of death are spread. Loëgria's chief Draws his bright sword, and rushes to destroy. In vain. At once an hundred guardian arms Extend their covering shields, and pour at once An hundred darts against the monarch's head. But not as yet hell's dreadful ministers Had, in the course of time prescrib'd, led on Th' appointed minute; and each thirsty dart, Turn'd by their breath, or by their sable shields Repell'd, falls harmless. Full of wrath, he sees His conquest ravish'd, and with thund'ring voice Pursues the foe, and fires his martial bands, Then bathes his slaught'ring sword in vulgar gore. Nor less Belinus to revenge incites His heroes. Ev'ry kindling bosom glows

With noble heat, and mighty lust of fame. And first, where tow'ring in the foremost rank The might of Butes stood, Gerontius mark'd, And aim'd the deadly jav'lin. Sounding shrill It flew, and pierc'd the warrior's neck. He falls Prone on the plain. Loëgria's troops behold Their bravest slain, and smit with panic fear Recede: th' exulting victor bears the spoil. Next Durius fell, pierc'd by Catellus' dart; Not unreveng'd, for warlike Leucon saw, And with swift motion whirling round dismiss'd The polish'd pebble from the rapid sling. Maglaunus feels its force, while on his car Sublime, the boaster vaunts his matchless arm. By Elidaucus Phrygian Dares fell: Griev'd at the sight, and ardent for revenge, The noble Ilus rear'd his mighty lance; But satiate with the praise already won, The wary chief within the lines retir'd, Nor bray'd superior force. Alternate thus

The fortune of the battle ebbs and flows, And now Loëgria, now Cornubia bleeds.

Now paus'd the fight. A narrow space divides The warring nations, and the rattling storm Of flying darts subsides: but here and there Some arm unbidden hurls the random spear: Meanwhile, on either hand the chiefs repair The ranks disorder'd. Now again the blast Of the shrill trumpet, and the shout confus'd Of charging myriads, with the clank of arms, And sound of rushing feet, pierces the air. 'The tumult thickens: now the keen-edg'd sword Is bath'd in blood; the slaughter grows around, Wounded they wound, and dying they destroy. As when the sea, in narrow channel pent, Where Cambria's mountains lift their snow-clad heads. And overlook Eblana's distant bay, By strong attraction rais'd, on either hand Wins on the shore, and ebbing now retires, Till in the middle way the meeting waves

Encounter, and in foaming conflict join'd, Loud roars the furious surge, and mounts to heav'n. Or, as of old, when that Arabian gulf Into his oozy bed the chosen seed Receiv'd, while his disparted waves, upheld By pow'r divine, on either side appear'd High-rais'd stupendous, like th' embattled wall Of some imperial city: vaunting loud, The rash Ægyptian pours in fierce pursuit Innumerable force of chariots arm'd, Horsemen, and foot, that shake the spear, or draw The sounding bow, into the dreadful void. Then, at th' Almighty bidding, to their bed Accustom'd rush the whelming waters: loud They roar, and louder far, than when the storm Rolls on in thunder through the darken'd air; Not less the horrid din, when Ætna howls Through all her caverns with sulphureous flames, Mix'd with the groans of that rebellious crew Who warr'd with heaven. Upon the foaming waves Arms, chariots, ensigns of proud war, appear
At random tost, and floating carcases
Attest Almighty wrath, and baffled pride.

And now two chiefs of force immense, whose spears Wide-wasting had with many an inroad gor'd The front of battle, in their sanguine course, Approach, and adverse stand with threat'ning arms. On either side the troops retiring yield Space for the conflict, and with eager eyes And awful silence wait th' impending fight. As when a comet through the darken'd air Blazes portentous with disastrous fires; And some bright planet in his rapid course Threatens with fierce encounter, or fix'd star To hurl from his appointed seat; dismay'd The nations view the dreadful prodigy, And wait the ruin of conflicting worlds. So gaz'd both armies, when his lifted spear Brave Leoline withdrew, and thus began. "Illustrious Uther, in this sanguine field VOL. II.

Say, does thy breast with wonted ardour glow; While the keen point of thy victorious spear Is bath'd in kindred blood, and all around The race of Troy by mutual wounds expire? We too, in league of friendship once conjoin'd, Who shar'd the rites of hospitable Jove, The mantling goblet, and the festal board, Now with blind fury, lift our impious arms Against each other's life."-" Alas! my friend," The noble Uther with a sigh return'd, " Avails it aught in war's relentless ear To pour the lenient balm of prudent speech? Sweet pity's voice amidst the battle's roar Unnotic'd dies away, and Justice speaks Her high command in vain. But what are we, Whom nor resentment keen of suffer'd wrong. Nor pride of pow'r defy'd, incites to arms, But base submission to superior sway? No more I lift the guilty spear. I mourn My fatal triumphs, nor the palm of fame

Dare claim from actions, which my soul abhors.

Some god, my friend, some god thy breast inspir'd

To sheath the sword, and give the nations peace.

Bid we the conflict end." While yet he speaks,

Glad Leoline restrains the rushing bands.

Along the lines the rage of war subsides.

Now o'er the dismal field, with carnage red, Terrific Mista roll'd her gloomy eyes. "Enough," she cried, "has stream'd of vulgar blood. The hour approaches. Hela's drear abode Unfolds its vast, and ever-during gates, And all her shadowy reign is mov'd throughout, Sisters, prepare the fatal web; prepare The pow'rful song." The dreadful deities Each at the word bestrides her sable steed. Hilda, and Sangrida, abhorred forms, Besmear'd with blood: Geira, and Gondula, And the dark frown of Hiorthrimula. At whose dire aspect nature shrinks appall'd, The wholesome plants are blasted, and the blood

Chain'd in the frozen veins. At once they rise, Borne on the rushing blast. The clouds of heav'n Are roll'd around, and through the misty air The shepherd dimly views the dreadful forms Glancing with lightning speed. At their approach The mountain trembles on its solid base. And at their potent voice, its marble sides, Disparting, to the eye of day unfold The secrets of its cavern'd womb, where reigns Primæval Darkness on her ebon throne. And now the fatal loom their hands prepare: And now they weave the dreadful web; meanwhile They chant the solemn death-devoting strain. "Begin the song. To us the King of heav'n Commits the fortune of the sanguine field. Beneath our hands the fatal texture grows, Which dooms the heroes of the earth to death. Thrice blest for whom, in his resplendent hall, The sire of gods the genial feast prepares, The fair reward of honourable deeds!

Weave we the web. Whom Odin's wrath pursues, Rack'd with disease, palsied with icy age, Or basely falling in the arms of peace; To that drear mansion, where her gloomy court Hela, abhorr'd of gods and men, maintains, Hurl'd by the Destinies, where Pain resides, And bloated Sloth, and Famine's meagre form, Anguish, Repentance, Sorrow, Shame, Despair, Shall howl in torment. To that dismal reign, To that abhorred goddess we devote The wretch, whose pride neglects offended heav'n. Attend, ye Destinies! and hear, oh hell, Through all thy realms of horror! at our voice Rouse all thy ghosts, and ratify the doom," Then all at once upon their winged steeds The sisters rose in air, and brandish'd fierce Their blazing falchions. Soon their rapid course Reach'd the wide plain, with heaps of carnage strew'd, Where sheath'd in arms the hostile nations stood Pausing from fight. For with astonish'd eyes

The king beheld the rage of war subside; And the two chiefs advancing o'er the plain In social guise, with looks announcing peace. When thus aloud the noble Uther spoke: "Hear, each Loëgrian, each Cornubian band, Whom impious rage to mutual wounds incites. And ye, obedient to whose high commands The nations move to war; Belinus, thou, And thou, Loëgria's monarch, noble Locrine, Attend to what th' immortal gods inspire, Who see with pity wretched mortals fall. Oh spare the relics of the Trojan name, Our rising country, and our promis'd glory! The bravest warrior in thy numerous host Select, oh king; or if thy generous heart Demands the conflict, in refulgent arms Go forth thyself, and dare Cornubia's pow'rs To find an equal foe." The king, incens'd, Rolls on the chief his angry eyes, and thus Furious replies: "Though every chief, like thee,

Shrink from the danger of the glorious field, Myself will dare their gather'd strength in arms, And with unfading laurels grace my brow. Then let the troops their shining helms unlace, And give to welcome rest their weary limbs. Her bravest warrior let Cornubia choose To meet my single arm: great Leoline, Ebrancus, or Gorbodion's vaunted strength, Or all combin'd, I dare their rage alone. Now let the priest the holy rites prepare, The altar blaze, the sacred victim fall. Then swear, Cornubia, if th' immortal pow'rs Shall grace with conquest my victorious arm, To leave the land in peace." He said, and now On Jove's high altar rise the hallow'd flames, The victim falls, and with uplifted hands Belinus calls th' immortal pow'rs to witness, And binds with solemn oath the firm accord. Then each Cornubian chief, whose glowing breast Heaves with the brave desire of fair renown,

Inscribes his name, and in the golden urn The lot is thrown. In deep attention fix'd, (While expectation swells the throbbing breast,) All gazing stand, and silence reigns around, When now the Herald to th' impatient hosts Proclaims the name of Leoline, With joy The warrior hears, and claims the noble strife. Then rose the king, and press'd in courteous guise The hero's hand. "Illustrious Leoline. The gods, to whom our fame is dear, have giv'n, Indulgent to our pray'r, a noble foe: Whose conquest, (and forgive me, generous chief, If with so bright a hope my bosom glows,) Shall with its fairest wreath my long career Of glory crown. Perhaps beneath thy sword Fate dooms my fall. How vast thy praise, when all My laurels flourish on thy favour'd brow, And all the triumphs of my arm are thine! But now the solemn night her ebon car Drives up the steep of heav'n, and parting day

Pierces with ruddy beam the western cloud.

Since night forbids the combat, share the feast.

Repose, ye warriors, from your glorious toils,

And draw new vigour from the flowing bowl.

When beams the rosy morn, in glitt'ring arms

We sheath our limbs, and claim the promis'd fight."

Thus spoke the king, with pride and hope elate;

But fate impends and death expects her prey.

From Avon's banks the fierce Sisilius came,
And with Loëgria's youth appear'd in arms,
Him, while the midnight bowl inflam'd to rage,
And frantic deeds, with threats and vile reproach
The king had once dishonour'd: reason soon
Resum'd her sway, and the repentant prince
With gifts of price, and high distinction sooth'd
Th' offended chief, and sought to gain his love.
In vain. He brooded silent o'er his wrong,
And nourish'd in his fierce and gloomy soul
Thirst of revenge, and inextinguish'd hate.
Him, now retiring to his lonely tent,

With slow and sullen step, the fatal pow'r, Mista, the minister of Odin's wrath, Beheld, and thither bent her rapid flight, In form like Elidure, his friend belov'd, Friend of his youth, who knew, and knowing shar'd His sorrows, and with his resentments glow'd. "And whither does my friend," the goddess said, " Now bend his steps? Shall dark despair invade The noble breast? Does vengeance wake no more?" "Think not," he cried, and from his flashing eyes Shot lightnings, "that the hope of dear revenge Burns here no more. Upon this hated earth, This earth, the kingdom of my foe accurst, I drag a load of miserable life, While partial heav'n retards th' expected hour." "Arraign not heav'n," the dreadful pow'r replies, "This is the ready colouring of fear, That shrinks at fancied danger; while the brave Compels reluctant fortune to befriend him. Does not that hand with never-erring aim

Speed the swift arrow's flight? And now the king Unarm'd, and unsuspicious, vainly deems No danger near, and for the feast prepares. Th' expected hour is come; and lo, the gods, The gods themselves proclaim it!" As she speaks, Sudden her form expands, her lofty crest Reaches to heav'n, and to his wond'ring eyes Blazes a comet with portentous fires. Across her shoulders hangs her horrid shield, And in her mighty hand the pond'rous spear Seems like a pine, which from the birth of time Has brav'd the tempest on Norweyan hills. Then, borne upon the wings of mighty winds, She hovers o'er him with her shield display'd, And fills his glowing breast with fearless rage. Now bent on vengeance, from his quiver'd store He draws the keenest shaft; with eager eye Now marks its victim: sharply twangs the string; Trembles the conscious earth; the thunder rolls; The dreadful sisters clash their sounding arms.

The king that instant, in the golden bowl Rais'd high the sparkling wine, and bad his guests Indulge the feast, and give a loose to joy. His throat receives the deadly weapon; prone He falls, and spurns the earth, and dying, grasps With agonizing hands the bloody dust. Amazement, fear, confusion, seiz'd on all! With tumult now the echoing camp resounds, And fierce reproach, and furious threats arise. Loëgria's heroes grasp their shining swords, And fit their helms, and lift their pond'rous shields. Belinus strives to sooth their rage in vain, Disclaims the treason, and attests the skies. When lo! before their wond'ring eyes appears, Sisilius, glorying in the bloody deed: "Warriors," he cried, "suspend your frantic strife. By me the shaft was sped. The festal board, Th' assembled chiefs beheld the brutal wrong; Behold the just revenge! How art thou fall'n, Proud and imperious man! My triumph now

Is full, and honour from my brighten'd crest
Shines forth with beams unsullied. I have liv'd
Enough to vengeance, and with daring hand
Have seiz'd reluctant fame. Now welcome death."
So saying, with indignant foot he spurn'd
The breathless carcase, and the pointed dart,
With steady hand against his breast impell'd,
Plung'd in his heart. He falls, without a groan
He dies, and on his face a ghastly smile
Remains, that speaks the triumph of his soul.

Now all the camp resounds with loud lament;
And rumour spreads abroad the dreadful tale.
The wretched Guendolen, who sat retir'd
Amidst her virgin train, in silent woe,
And torn with grief alternate, and disdain,
Starts at the sound, and of the cause inquires,
Too soon to learn the utmost rage of fate.
For now her careful eyes afar descry
With slow and solemn march the martial train
Advancing through the gloom; their spears revers'd

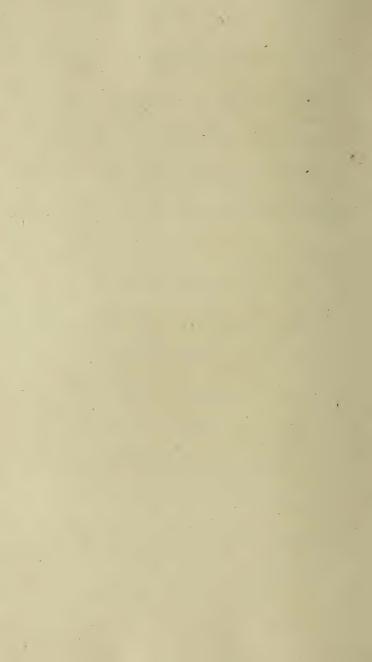
Are trail'd along, their banners sweep the ground, The moon pale glimmers on their burnish'd arms, And mournful music loads the passing gale. And now with boding fears her bosom heaves. She knew some hero of distinguish'd rank Had fall'n. More near the sad procession now Appears, and borne on high a sable bier Reveals it horrors. There a breathless corse Extended lies; and soon the well-known arms Studded with gold, the shield's refulgent orb, The proudly-crested helm, which oft her hands Had taught to glitter on his manly brow, When, in the war against the giant crew, She arm'd her hero for the sanguine field, Flash on her sight. She shrieks, and shrieking falls; The shades of death her swimming eyes surround. Her weeping damsels with assiduous care Recall her fleeting spirits. Some apply The living freshness of the crystal spring; Some wake the gentle breeze. Returning life

Shoots o'er her redd'ning cheek. Her languid eyes She raises, sighing from her inmost breast. But as again her husband's bleeding corse Full in her sight appears, again she faints: Again the virgin train their cares renew. At length the struggling passion finds a vent, Complaints break forth, and tears begin to flow. "Was it for this," she cried, "I rous'd to war Cornubia's chiefs? for this, in rugged camps Forgot the softness of my gentle sex, Nor fled the horrid clash of hostile arms? To mourn for ever o'er my widow'd bed; To see the object of my fondest love, Life of my life, and end of all my wishes, Stretch'd pale before me, a poor mangled corse, With wounds disfigur'd, and besmear'd with blood? Is that the face, ou which so oft I gaz'd With fond delight, and rapture ever new? Is that the neck, round which my clasping arms Oft twin'd their am'rous folds, in happier hours?

(Ah happy hours! for I believ'd he lov'd.") Then, as officious memory recall'd Each word, each look, each dear and ravish'd joy, Each word, each look, each joy remember'd, gives New stings to grief, new horrors to despair. And now her mighty wrongs, her slighted charms, And source of all her woe, the Scythian dame, Rush on her mind: now fiercer tumults heave Her lab'ring breast, and rage succeeds to grief. As in the Lybian forest's horrid shade, Where the rank soil with deadly poisons teems, And echo still repeats the dreadful notes Of the fierce savage prowling for his prey, The lioness at eve her craggy den Returning seeks, but seeks in vain her young, The dusky hunters' prize: her panting sides With fury heave, and mingled grief and rage Swell at her heart: her fiery eye-balls glare: And, every sinew with new vigour brac'd By mighty anguish, forth she bounds, to quench

Her kindled rage in blood. Thus Guendolen
To vengeance all her savage soul resigns;
To keenest torture dooms her hated foe;
Dwells on the welcome thought with cruel joy;
Already sees her tears, and hears her groans,
And marks with eager eye the pangs of death.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.



THE

## REVENGE

OF

# GUENDOLEN.

BOOK V.

GUENDOLEN acknowledged by both Armies. Estrildis hears of the Death of Locrine. She is made captive with her Daughter Sabra. Both are condemned to death by Guendolen. Apotheosis of Sabra.

### REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

### BOOK V.

Now with firm hand Corineus' daughter grasps
The double sceptre, and Loëgria's chiefs,
Join'd with Cornubia, to her sovereign throne
Their ready homage bear, her right confess'd.
And either army, which so lately wag'd
With mutual hatred unrelenting war,
Now with united banners march, now own
One common leader, and one prince obey.
Towards Avon's banks they move: for so the queen
Commands; whose soul, impatient for revenge,
Can know no rest, while yet the guilty dame,

The rival fair, beholds the light of heav'n. Sullen and sad, the haughty Guendolen Conceals her cruel purpose, and resolv'd Shuts up each avenue to mercy, steels Her breast to every tender thought; ev'n grief Finds there no entrance, while revenge and rage Fill all her soul, and all her pow'rs employ. The chiefs respect her sorrows, nor inquire Her secret counsels; but conjecture oft Estrildis' fate. "Alas!" they cry, "what pray'rs Shall calm the fury of a woman's breast, When rous'd by jealous scorn to hate and vengeance? Yet Guendolen is born of generous race, By virtue grac'd, by fortune's gifts adorn'd, And pity soonest dwells in noble minds. For gentle Sabra too, her tender years, Her artless innocence may surely plead, May win some pardon for Estrildis' fault." Thus commun'd they; for much the hapless dame Their minds to favour and compassion mov'd:

For she was fairer than the blushing morn,

And gentler than the gentle western air

Breathing o'er flow'rs, and all her fault was love.

Since Boarex her baffled spells deplor'd; Since the dread vision of the fatal grove; Long time to grief abandon'd, and despair, All bath'd in tears the mournful nymph appear'd, As some fair lily droops, surcharg'd with rain. At length bright hope again began to dawn; For when does hope's soft pow'r the wretch forsake? When wisdom tries her boasted arts in vain, When baffled reason fails, and all is dark, Hope spreads gay visions round the mourner's head, Grief smiles in tears, and pain forgets to groan. Then stern adversity her iron scourge Plies with redoubled force, and all her storms With fury gathers round the victim's head: But plies her scourge, and calls her storms in vain; Amidst the gloom the fair illusions play, And fancy gives the joy by fate denied.

Hence, to her wonted sports return'd at length, Each irksome thought with pleasures still renew'd She charms to rest; and dance, and jocund song, The lute's soft music, and the sounding lyre, Float on the breeze, and gladden ev'ry shade. Now too the tongue of fame proclaim'd aloud How all Loëgria in her monarch's cause Pour'd forth her armed youth prepar'd for war: How Sture's fair banks with glitt'ring armour shone, And far and wide the crowded camp extends: And how the king, with swift and secret march, Had pass'd the foe, and join'd his loyal bands. This heard, her woman's mind, still prone to change, Pass'd quick to rash presumption from despair; And deem'd the foe subdu'd, and her lov'd lord Ev'n then returning, with the laurel crown'd.

'Twas night, and sleep, descending o'er her couch, Shed on her languid limbs his balmy dew:

When, lo! a fearful vision rose. A bier,

Eorne slow, with solemn march before her pass'd,

O'er which a veil of deepest black was drawn, And from each searching eye conceal'd the dead. Estrildis from th' attendant train inquires; But all, with downcast look, and gesture sad, Move on in silence; but at length appear'd A female form, superior in her grief, Majestic, and alone. Fast flow'd her tears, Incessant, streaming on her heaving breast, O'er which her arms were folded. The sad sight Estrildis with unwonted passion view'd. When now, before the couch arriv'd, she stopp'd, And turning rais'd her mournful head: the tears Now faster flow'd, and from her breast she drew Deep sighs, and clasp'd her agonizing hands. Estrildis then her mother knew. She shriek'd. And grasp'd with fond embrace the fleeting shade. The strong emotion burst the bonds of sleep, And all the vision vanish'd; but impress'd Deep on her mind the sad remembrance dwelt, And fill'd her secret soul with boding fears.

Now beam'd the rosy morn. Beside their queen Her virgin handmaids stood. "Awake," they cried, "Awake, fair goddess of these silvan scenes. For thee the sun his genial pow'r displays, And the glad earth bestrews thy path with flow'rs. Where'er thou tread'st the rose spontaneous blows, And lilies spring, and balmy odours rise. The breeze, that lightly sweeping o'er the lawn Scarce moves the daisy on its slender stalk, To greet thy beauties still more lightly breathes, And whispers softly, 'tis the time for joy." Rous'd at their gentle call, the beauteous dame Comes smiling forth: yet still amidst her smiles, The downcast eye, and often starting tear, Some inward grief, some hidden care betrays. Now all, as chance or wanton mirth inclines, In various sports the pleasing hours employ. These ply their nimble feet in measur'd dance: To softest notes, that tender wishes breathe, The glowing damsels move with easy grace;

And in the liquid radiance of their eyes Desire now sparkles, and now rapture melts. Soon to quick strains, that speak triumphant joy, Their nimble footsteps scarcely print the flow'rs; Nor can the eye their rapid course discern Through all the mazes of the varied dance, While this flies swiftly, and while that pursues, And shouting mirth from every glade resounds. Some, like Diana's virgin nymphs attir'd, The silver bow, the painted quiver bear. These with fleet greyhounds o'er the level lawn The flying hare, the dappled fawn pursue. While gentler some, in od'rous shades reclin'd, Tune softest voices to celestial airs; Airs such as once in myrtle groves were sung. What time the smiling queen of gay desires Forsook her Paphian reign, her rosy bow'r, To hear the ditties of the Lesbian dame. To this fair troop, in mute attention rapt, Estrildis listen'd, for their theme was love.

They sung how first the sweetly-painful fires Steal unsuspected to the virgin's heart: Then her soft breast what strange emotions heave! What burning blushes tinge her glowing cheek! She sighs, but yet she knows not why she sighs; She blushes, yet unconscious of the flame. Ah, simple maid! too well those eyes declare Whence spring thy blushes, whence thy sighs arise; Those eyes which sparkle when the youth appears, Those eyes suffus'd with tears when he retires. What anguish now her gentle bosom rends! What doubts, what fears, her lab'ring mind perplex! But see! the loves in flow'ry fetters lead The youth enamour'd to the secret bow'r. Now the coy maid with feign'd resentment burns, Reproves his rashness, and rejects his suit; But soon the stolen glance, the frequent sigh, The glowing cheek, the fault'ring voice, betray The soft deceit, the mutual flame reveal. The queen delighted hears, the grateful song

Wakes sweet remembrance. Fancy gaily paints Scenes of past joys, and every joy renews. In plaintive notes the nymphs resume the strain, In plaintive notes; but still the theme was love. They sung the poor, forsaken maid, who weeps Her charms despis'd, her easy faith betray'd. Nor swells her bosom with a lighter grief, Who mourns the absence of the youth she loves, Torn from her arms to brave the stormy main, Or nobly toiling in the field of fame; But never, never to return again. Estrildis now her soul to grief resigns, While in her mind distracting fears arise; Fast flow her tears, quick pants her throbbing breast. Th' attentive virgins change their artful song, And now no more the nymph in absence mourns; The youth returns, his toils and perils o'er, The youth returns, with wreaths of conquest crown'd. Oh joy unhop'd! oh bliss beyond compare!

Oh, pangs of absence, amply now repaid! Nor yet had ceas'd the strain; but now the queen Saw one that press'd the plain with hasty step; His head the helmet bore, his hand the spear. Sudden with beating heart she ran, she flew; "And comes my lord?" with eager voice she cried. But when she saw his bent and mournful brow, His downcast eye, and mark'd his fault'ring voice, Ere yet his tardy words an utterance found, She guess'd the worst. At once through every nerve Shoots quick the thrilling anguish. With fix'd eye Gazing on empty air, hands firmly clasp'd, And pale and ghastly cheek, she stands. In vain Her sad attendants with assiduous care Would sooth her grief. As if depriv'd of sense, Their words she hears not, nor regards their tears. So Niobe appear'd, when her last hope, Pierc'd by relentless Dian's vengeful shaft, Fell from her clasping arms, a breathless corse.

Now on her widow'd couch Estrildis lies, Still in mute sorrow rapt, with eyes still fix'd, And looks that witness'd deep despair. Till day Declines, and through the solemn hours of night, Which sooth with welcome rest each lighter woe, Now by loud wailing, by entreaty now, Constant and warmly urg'd, the damsel train Would wake attention: now the winning charm Of music breathes unheard: her darling Sabra With sweet caresses wooes her wonted smile, And now implores regard with piteous tears: Those sweet caresses she bestows in vain, And long those tears unnotic'd fall. At length Sudden upon her child she cast her view. Then gush'd the torrent. Springing from the couch. Round the dear pledge of her disastrous loves She clasp'd her agonizing arms; she wept, She sobb'd aloud; and much with fault'ring tongue, In broken murmurs, while the bursting tears

Stream on her breast, complains: "My child, my child! Why did I bear thee? Thou wilt curse the hour That gave thee to behold the light of day; And her that bore thee. Oh that pitying fate Had cut my thread of life in early youth !-And must I bear the bitter scorn, the taunts Of haughty Guendolen? Alas, alas! There was a time when all her rage was vain; But now the noble Locrine is no more. What then remains but death? Oh fatal charms! Oh beauty, once so priz'd, but now abhorr'd! Then, then I should have died, when first he sought To move my virgin heart with guilty love; When first my conscious bosom felt the flame. He had liv'd happy yet. Oh Guendolen! Sure never pity touch'd that savage breast, Nor gentle love held soft dominion there. Had I forsaken mourn'd my slighted charms, In tears my lonely hours had pass'd away;

I would have pierc'd the air with heavy sighs, And sorrow'd till my aching heart was broke, And death had wrapp'd me in eternal rest; But never, never thought of curst revenge, And stain'd my hands with blood, to me more dear Than is the vital stream which warms my heart. Alas! for him alone I wish'd to live: In him was all my joy; to make him blest My only hope; and, but to see him blest, Though in another's arms, had broke the gloom Of black despair with some faint beams of bliss. But thou hast not the soul of woman; thou Art merciless; his blood is on thy steel. Mine too must stream; and oh, might mine suffice, My ready hand should give the torrent way. But thou, my child, poor wretched orphan! oh, What is reserv'd for thee? A mother's love Clings to thee still, and binds me yet to life." Thus as she mourns, the tears incessant stream, VOL, II,

Sighs follow sighs, and groan succeeds to groan.

From her dim eyes soft lustre beams no more;

Her cheek is faded, and her lips are pale.

So beneath southern skies, some tender plant
Lifts its fair head, and courts the solar ray:

Transplanted now, while summer's genial pow'r

With transient beauty paints some northern clime,
It blooms in all its native charms array'd:
But when stern winter comes, and in his train

Bleak storms, and hail, and snows, and killing frost,
Discolour'd all its drooping leaves are seen,

And, scarcely blown, its blossoms strew the ground.

Now in the sweet abode of love and joy
Glitters the deadly lance, the helmet flames;
And where the lute's soft notes, and softer voice
Of amorous maiden, breath'd enchanting airs,
The trumpet's clangor rings. A warlike train,
Charg'd with their sovereign's stern commands, appear.
Plung'd in despair, with mighty grief oppress'd,

Impatient of the load of wretched life, Their fierce demeanour, and denouncing death, Each dark and frowning brow Estrildis saw, And saw unmov'd. What ills had fate in store, What could inventive cruelty inflict, Which to her anxious mind the busy hand Of fancy, in the sad and lonely hour, In all its horrors had not yet pourtray'd? Not so the damsel train. With piercing shrieks They rend the air, and now with frantic gesture Crowd round their much-lov'd mistress. On her robe One clings in speechless woe: one bathes her hand With tears; one fondly twines her clasping arms About her slender waist; another seeks To print upon her lips a parting kiss; This, rolling in the dust, her graceful locks Tears from the roots, and beats her wretched breast; That with loud cries arraigns relentless heav'n. She with mild action sooths their stormy grief, And thanks their faithful love. Advancing now,

A rude unmanner'd ruffian from her brow, The mark of royalty, (so will'd the queen) The sacred fillet tore with churlish hand. Another with opprobrious taunts revil'd. Behind her back the harsh and galling chain Confin'd her snowy wrists. With threat'ning voice Now the rough soldier urg'd her trembling steps. Her beauteous eyes, suffus'd with tears, she rais'd With such a sweet and moving eloquence, That all at once his savage soul was mov'd, And his stern nature, long to sights of woe Inur'd, and practis'd in the trade of blood, Now first to pity yielded. Through the band Spread swift the soft contagion. Now they saw With alter'd mind each soul-enchanting grace Borrowing a nameless, and resistless charm From her sad fate. Such was the general woe, So were their rugged bosoms mov'd, it seem'd As if the daughter, or the wife of each Was led to instant death. And now they came

Where held the rival queen her throned state. Soon as impatient Guendolen beheld The object of her hate thus fall'n, and captive, A gloomy joy her features overspread. "Is this," she cried, "is this the boasted form At whose superior lustre my weak charms Must fade away, no more to wake desire? Is this the haughty dame, whose stern decree Has sentenc'd Guendolen to shameful exile? Say, does thy mercy yet revoke the doom, Or can no pray'rs thy stubborn heart subdue?" Th' ungenerous insult the fair mourner heard With silent anguish. Prostrate on the earth, Before the feet of her relentless foe, Awhile she wept, "By those who gave thee birth," By the dear name of mother," she exclaims, "For oh, canst thou, who bear'st a mother's name, Behold my sorrows with unpitying eyes? Not for myself I plead. (Too well I know What fatal doom awaits me.) But my child

She never has offended. Look on her. Oh bend thine eyes upon her, see, she kneels, She weeps, poor victim of her mother's guilt. Oh let not virgin innocence in vain On tender mercy call. Oh spare her, spare her, And ages yet unborn shall bless thy name. Ev'n in the gloomy regions of the dead, Thy Locrine's spirit shall rejoicing hear, And thank the goodness which preserves his child. Ah, wherefore dost thou frown? Yes, let me perish, I own my guilt, prepare new torments for me. Patient I suffer, and in death my voice Shall speak thy praise, so thou but bid me hope My child, my darling Sabra may survive." "Urge me no more," the haughty dame replies, "My soul is fix'd immoveable as fate." Detested wretch! driv'n from my husband's bed, Hurl'd from a throne, the daughter of Corineus By thee has wander'd forth a woeful exile. How many heroes by thy crimes have fall'n!

What widows mourn, what orphans thou hast made! By thee my Locrine died. And would'st thou now Plead the curst fruit of thy pernicious joys To win reluctant mercy? No, the ghosts Of myriads in thy fatal quarrel slain, My husband's spirit, call for signal vengeance. Thou diest, and she, the minion of thy love, Is she not thine, and shall she hope for mercy?" Thus while she speaks, Estrildis' soul is torn With racking anguish. Now she knows all hope Extinguish'd, and the near approach of death, Inevitable death, beholds: now all The mother swells her breast: with eager eyes She gazes on her child; the galling chain Forbids a last embrace. The tender maid Lifts her imploring hands in pray'r to heav'n. Now by each fond endearing name she calls Her agonizing parent; now entreats Remorseless Guendolen, and weeps aloud, But, lo, the ministers of death approach.

Her fears redouble; throbs her heaving breast; She flies with trembling feet. Alas! in vain. Pale, gasping, down she sinks. Like some poor hare, Whose failing speed the clamorous pack o'ertake. One eager hound hangs o'er her furry back; His tusky jaws already drink her blood. Quick glancing with a bound she turns away, But still where'er she turns she finds a foe. Rudely they hale the fainting maid along, Nor could her youth, nor could her lovely form Move kind compassion. Oh, what bitter pangs, Estrildis, tore thy miserable breast At this distracting sight! Oh Guendolen, Has not thy savage fury spent its rage? See how with frantic air the wretched mother Struggles to burst her bonds, and struggling still, Pursues her with her eyes! "Barbarians, where, Where do you drag my child? Oh quickly kill me, Let me not see her death!" Her cries are vain. They drag her to the cliff. The river rolls

His rapid wave beneath. Estrildis strains, Distracted, every nerve. Maternal love And fear supply unwonted force. She bursts From the surrounding guard; she runs, she flies: In vain the guard her rapid course pursue. She gains the cliff, and round her darling child Had thrown with eager haste her clasping arms, But still her arms were bound. From the steep brow She sees the victim hurl'd. When, lo! the stream Suspends his course; the swelling waves subside; The winds are hush'd; each breast a sacred awe Pervades, prophetic of some strange event. And now the yielding surface of the lake Divides, and all the train of sister nymphs, Nereids and Naiads, from their coral beds And sparry grots, their shining tresses rear; In their soft arms, the falling maid receive, And swiftly bear from sight. The wreathed shell Of Triton sounds meanwhile, and tells th' approach

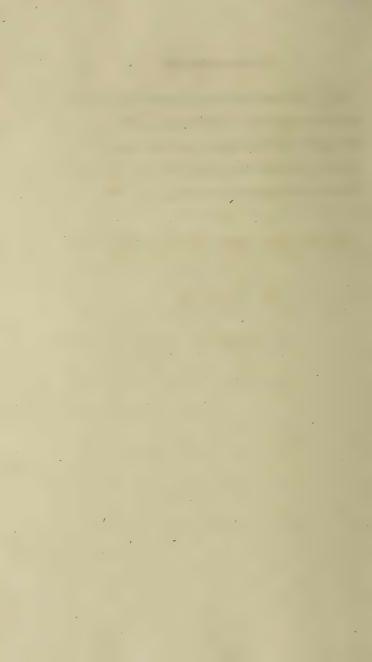
Of the sea gods: Ocean, the hoary sire; Majestic Tethys; and the dreaded power Who wields th' earth-shaking trident: Nereus old: Doris, and Amphitrite; and, beloved Of thundering Jove, the silver-footed dame; And every god, and every nymph, that rules The fountains, and rivers of the isle; Nor absent was the queen of soft desires, Sprung from the wave, delight of earth and heaven, Fair Aphrodite. Scattering balmy sweets, The loves around her, and the graces move, And the light zephyr plies his filmy wings. Won by her soft request, her kindred gods The gentle Sabra, from her race deriv'd, Accept, henceforth the goddess of the stream, With holy rites ador'd, and warbled song, The pale assistants fear and wonder seiz'd. While joy unhop'd on lost Estrildis beam'd, And fill'd her soul with courage not her own.

"Now, Guendolen," she cried, "I scorn thy power,
And all thy rage is vain. Oh welcome, death!

No longer arm'd with terrors, thus I court thee."

So saying, from the steep and lofty cliff

Headlong she plung'd into the rolling flood.

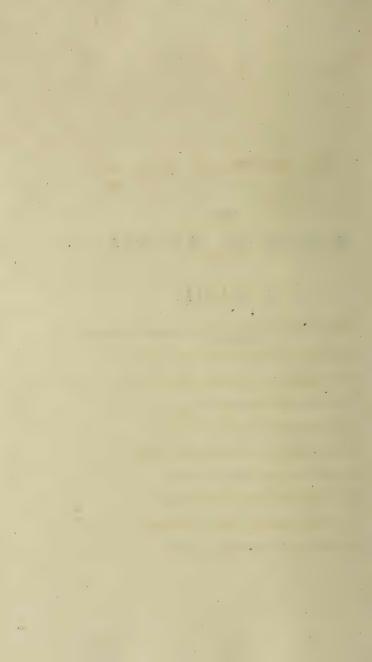


#### THE

# BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO I.



# THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

## A TALE.

### CANTO I.

'Twas when the zephyr's breath had wak'd the flowers,
And May with blossoms deck'd her vernal bowers,
Two knights with various talk beguil'd the way,
Which near the stream and through the forest lay.
Sons of one sire, nor more by blood allied,
Than by the bands of friendship closely tied,
In social arms the noble pair proceeds
To purchase glory by adventurous deeds;
Yet different passions each brave bosom fir'd,
By honour one, as one by love inspir'd.

An aged monarch held his gentle reign, Where Deva washes the Cornavian plain. An only daughter was his pride and care, Mild as the dawn, and fairest of the fair. This prince, by conquest once with glory crown'd, Nor less in arts of useful peace renown'd, Proclaim'd a tournament, still pleas'd to view The martial game his triumphs past renew. Thither the warriors urg'd their steeds along, Cadwall, and Paladour, the bold and young. His strength superior, and his dauntless heart, To Cadwall omens of success impart. As brave was Paladour, and skill'd to wield Each various weapon in the listed field: But anxious fears his labouring mind infest, And secret passion swells his heaving breast. "Round other brows let wreaths of conquest twine," Thus pray'd the youth, "the lovely maid be mine." Cadwall amaz'd his pensive mien survey'd, As slow they journey'd through surrounding shade.

- 'Why droops,' he cried, 'my brother and my friend,'
- 'Though full in view immortal fame ascend?'
- 'The brave of ev'ry clime the prize contest;
- 'But no base fears invade that noble breast;
- ' For nurs'd in arms, and bred to hardy fight,
- 'Thy sport is war, and danger thy delight.
- 'Yet dost thou droop! Thy secret wound explain,
- 'Or do I boast the name of friend in vain?'
- 'And will not Cadwall,' Paladour replied,
- 'The fond distresses of my heart deride?
- ' Cadwall, unknowing of love's soft alarms,
- ' And kindling only at the sound of arms?
- 'Yet not on choice, but unresisted fate,
- \* Depends the various colour of our state;
- 'Thou by th' Almighty will to fame impell'd,
- 'Thy friend in love's inglorious bondage held.
- 'Know then that, once, beneath the beechen shade,
- ' Tir'd with the chace my fainting limbs I laid.
- ' Sudden the rustling boughs invade my ear,
- ' Quick panting breath, and rapid steps I hear.

- ' Forth from the thicket burst a hind in flight,
- White as the snow on proud Plinlimmon's height;
- ' And through the glade her trembling speed renews,
- While close behind a ravenous wolf pursues.
- ' Compassion touch'd me, and my pointed dart
- 'Had reach'd, with certain aim, the monster's heart;
- ' But sudden thunder shook the woods around,
- 'Blue lightnings gleam'd, and earthquake rock'd the ground,
- ' Dire yells were heard, and shrieks of wild affright,
- And all the vision vanish'd from my sight.
- Wondering I stood, with sacred horror fill'd,
- 'In ev'ry vein the vital current chill'd;
- When, lo, a female form divinely bright,
- ' Like the mild radiance of the queen of night,
- Rose on the shade. A lucid robe she wore,
- ' A golden wand her rosy fingers bore;
- 'But when the smiling nymph her silence broke,
- ' Celestial music warbled as she spoke.'

- "Receive," she cried, "Oh youth for ever dear,
- " My thanks, my love, and to my words give ear.
- " By thee preserv'd, I draw the vital air,
- "My wonted shape, my wonted power I bear.
- "Bound by strong spells, a milk-white hind I seem'd,
- "Till by thy prowess from the wolf redeem'd.
- " A false magician Archimago nam'd,
- "My favour sought, by mighty love inflam'd;
- "But sought in vain, I loath'd his impious kind,
- "Still prone to mischief, still to blood inclin'd.
- " Hence in his breast relentless hate he bore,
- "But veil'd his purpose, for he fear'd my pow'r.
- " For know that not of mortal seed I came,
- "Of fairy race, Melissa is my name.
- "One day surpriz'd, defenceless, o'er my head,
- "While yet I slept, the mutter'd charm he read.
- "Starting I fled. Where'er my steps he view'd
- "A fiend, in likeness of a wolf, pursu'd.
- "Oh, could my art a length of years bestow,
- " Exempt from pain, and ev'ry human woe,

- "The boon were thine! But thou submiss attend.
- "The bliss of man must on himself depend.
- " Such is the will of fate. One choice is giv'n
- "Of good, or ill, by all disposing Heav'n.
- "Fair be thy lot! But if thy judgment fail,
- "Know patient courage may at length prevail,
- "To milder doom the favouring powers dispose,
- " And fix the period of thy toils and woes.
- "But for th' ignoble herd, the dastard crew,
- " Afraid to choose, or choosing to pursue;
- "By men despis'd, nor more of gods the care,
- "Their lot is pain and anguish, and despair."
- 'The fairy spoke, and shook her flowing hair.
- That heavenly fragrance fill'd the circling air.
  - 'Light breezes now through trembling oziers play;
  - ' And lengthen'd shadows tell the closing day;
  - A pleasing languor crept through all my frame,
  - 'And sleep resistless o'er my senses came:
  - 'But when awake at length I raise my eyes,
  - What charming scenes, what new elysiums rise!

- Here the thick forest spreads profoundest night;
- ' Here opening glades admit the chequer'd light;
- ' Pours the swift torrent from the sounding hill;
- Or winds along the dale the murmuring rill;
- 'Through parting boughs now bursts the blazing day,
- 'Distinct and clear appears the streaming ray,
- 'The distant trees reflect the vivid beam,
- ' And all the glowing forest seems to flame:
- At length the glory of the plain is seen,
- A thousand beauties deck the varied scene;
- Slow through enamell'd meadows glides the stream,
- ' And distant lakes with silvery lustre gleam:
- ' Alone, majestic, here the oak ascends,
- Himself a wood, and wide his shade extends:
- ' Of softer beauty, and inferior size,
- Here mix'd with fir, the graceful birch arise,
- ' Whose drooping boughs, when zephyr wakes the dawn,
- ' Sweep the light drops that glitter on the lawn.
- 'Th' expanse beyond presents its varying dyes,
- ' Farms, temples, cities, turret-crown'd, arise.

- Blue hills that hide in clouds the lofty head,
- ' Rocks, fields, and woods, in bright confusion spread.
- ' Here while I gaz'd, Melissa stood beside,
- 'And press'd my hand, while smiling thus she cry'd:'
- " If shady groves, and flow'ry plains delight,
- "Well may these groves and plains attract the sight:
- "But soon the scene shall other joys dispense,
- "And charms superior greet thy ravish'd sense."
- ' Then through a winding path, with boughs o'erspread,
- 'Yet unexplor'd, my willing steps she led,
- ' To where the turf with brighter verdure glows,
- ' Proud to display the beauty of the rose,
- ' Which summer's warm embraces blushing meets,
- ' And yields reluctant her unrivall'd sweets.
- 'There blooms the violet beneath the shade,
- ' By the light zephyr's balmy theft betray'd;
- 'The bright carnation, and the lily pale,
- With aromatic fragrance scent the gale:
- 'There ev'ry shrub to buxom Flora dear,
- 'There all the treasures of the ripening year.

- A grotto too appears of living stone,
- Here bright with spars, and there with moss o'ergrown,
- From pendent rocks while trickling waters flow,
- That wind, and spread among the flowers below.
- ' Delightful seat! where rural nymphs might dwell,
- 'That tend the grove, and feed the crystal well;
- Or Venus from the noontide heat retire,
- 'To cherish amorous thoughts, and soft desire.
- ' Soon as confest the fairy rose to view,
- ' A troop of lovely females round her drew.'
- "Receive," she cried, "Melissa's honour'd guest,
- " Of all the race of man belov'd the best.
- " Preserv'd by him, I view my favourite bow'r,
- " And hail the daughters of my love once more.
- " Each soothing art, each winning charm employ,
- "He gave me freedom, move his heart to joy."
- ' With graceful gesture, and with courtly phrase,
- ' Each gentle damsel her command obeys,
- ' They bid me welcome to that soft retreat,
- Where the mild virtues with the graces meet.

- ' Now the gay dance my willing steps invites,
- ' And now the song's resistless charm delights.
- ' Fair was each nymph, but o'er the rest was found
- 'One lovely maid, with matchless beauty crown'd.
- ' Not half so bright were Helen's virgin charms,
- When Theseus prest her trembling in his arm:
- ' Nor thus she met the Phrygian youth's embrace,
- ' When favouring Venus heighten'd every grace.
- ' Ah who unmov'd that heavenly face had seen,
- 'That sweet simplicity, that modest mien?
- 'I lov'd, and soon avow'd my amorous pain,
- 'The blushing maiden heard not with disdain;
- ' Perhaps had favour'd, but Melissa's power
- ' Forbad. Now sudden fades the charming bower,
- 'In listless languor every sense is bound,
- ' And clos'd my eyes in magic sleep profound.
- ' But when I wake, again the beechen shade,
- 'The tangled forest, and the lonely glade,
- Rush on my view. With pensive steps, and slow,
- ' Back to the city's crowded walls I go;

- There seem the pleasures of the throng to share,
- While my full bosom heaves with anxious care;
- ' Doubtful, if true, the visions of the night,
- ' Or sleep deceiv'd me with illusions bright.
- ' And still the curse denounc'd assails my ear,
- Shakes my resolve, and chills my soul with fear.'
- 'Shall dreams,' incens'd the noble Cadwall cried,
- 'Thus quell thy spirit? Oh, forbid it, pride?
- The generous pride that manly bosoms fires,
- And lofty thoughts, and daring deeds inspires.
- Soon shall the martial plain, the lists prepar'd,
- 'The sounding trumpet, the recording bard,
- ' Renew the thirst of never-dying fame,
- 'And love be vanquish'd by a nobler flame.'

He said, meanwhile, regardless of their way,

Deep in the mazes of the wood they stray.

Descending now from his meridian throne,

The glorious sun with milder lustre shone:

The western sky was ting'd with vivid gold,

And ruddy beams the close of day foretold.

When sudden, where the beaten paths divide, Cadwall restrain'd his eager steed, and cried,

- ' Ere yet descend the viewless shades of night,
- Do thou the left explore, and I the right;
- ' And if again our destin'd course appear,
- Let thy loud horn assail my list'ning ear.'

He said, the gentle Paladour obey'd,

And turning journey'd through the shadowy glade.

Now easy was the way, and plain to sight,

Now meeting branches spread untimely night.

Dark, and more dark, the growing woods appear;

Scar'd by the clash of arms, the bounding deer

Starts from his lair, and wolves are howling near.

Pondering he stood, uncertain to pursue

His search, or backward trace his steps anew.

When, lo, Melissa stood reveal'd to sight,

Clear shone the distant trees with sudden light.

- 'To me are known,' the gracious fairy cried,
- What doubts, what fears thy anxious breast divide.

- Now to my words give ear. The blissful grove,
- 'The seat of peace, and innocence and love,
- Where thy rapt soul was held in soft delight,
- ' Was no delusive vision of the night.
- ' For thee the forest spreads his ample shade,
- And contemplation woos thee to the glade,
- Where nature's volume to thy view is giv'n,
- And sacred science lifts the soul to heav'n;
- While art shall bid, before thy wond'ring eyes,
- ' Her graceful forms in sweet enchantment rise,
- Beauty to thee her willing ear incline,
- And all the raptures love bestows be thine.
- But long oblivion waits thy fading name;
- These rosy bowers are not the path to fame.

She spoke, and rais'd aloft her magic wand,

Delightful scenes arise at her command.

Through myrtle groves the zephyr plies his wings,

And dulcet sounds, and balmy fragrance brings;

Nor distant far, amid the flow'ry glade,

Th' enamour'd youth beholds his fav'rite maid.

Ah, Paladour! in vain thy dauntless breast
Those glitt'ring arms with martial pomp invest;
Ah, taught in vain, upon the listed field,
To rein the steed, the fatal lance to wield;
No more loud trumpets summon thee to fight,
Love's gentle whispers woo thee to delight;
Sweet smiling lips, and sparkling eyes detain,
And beauty binds thee in her silken chain.

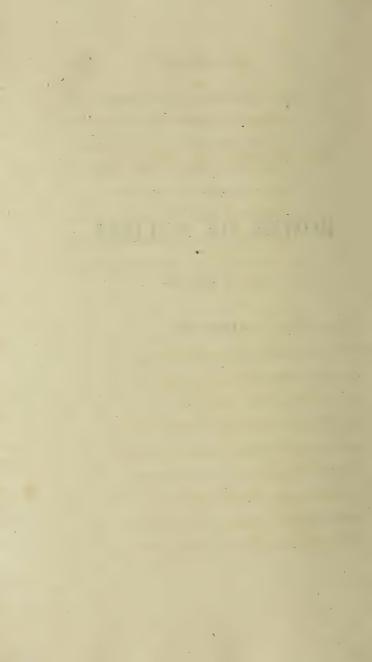
END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

### THE

# BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO II.



## THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

## A TALE.

## CANTO II.

To noble Cadwall now returns the song,

Who in the tangled forest wander'd long,

And oft he blows his sounding horn amain;

But only echo answers to the strain.

Now fear, now doubt his lab'ring mind torments,

And now he blames his friend, and now laments.

'Ah, Paladour! perhaps, by numbers slain;

'Thy failing voice on Cadwall call'd in vain.'

Resolv'd at length, he speeds with anxious breast.

To where the brave the prize of fame contest,

There yet he hopes to hear his brother's name, Assist his prowess, and partake his fame.

The lists were set, and round in order plac'd,
Renowned knights, and dames with beauty grac'd.
Above the rest, the monarchs hoary hair
Appears, and by his side the princely fair.
Her ivory hands the victor's meed unfold,
A scarf that glows with purple and with gold.
A knight before her stands, with ardent eyes,
Of fierce demeanour, and gigantic size:
In gorgeous arms his mighty limbs are drest;
A golden eagle forms his lofty crest.
As proudly confident he claims the prize,
Applauding thousands rend with shouts the skies.

- ' Let the bold knight, who dares my claim deny,
- ' Here, in bright arms the arduous conflict try.
- 'An hundred knights the bold defiance hear,
- 'Nor one encounters this victorious spear.'
  He said.' Upon his arm the royal maid,
  That envy'd scarf with graceful action laid;

When the shrill trumpet sudden sounds alarms, The throng divides, the herald calls to arms; Swift o'er the plain the thund'ring courser flies, And Cadwall stands before their wond'ring eyes. Across his dazzling armour's silver light, A baldric flam'd with glowing crimson bright; From the proud helmet, and the polish'd shield, Portentous splendour blazes on the field, And as he moves, and shakes his plumy crest, Unusual horror seizes every breast. As when the Greek the Dardan prince pursu'd, And his fell lance in heav'nly blood embru'd, Swift as he rush'd upon the prostrate foe, His cong'ring lance just lifted for the blow, Apollo's Ægis blaz'd before his eyes Surpriz'd, but undismay'd, he quits the prize. Th' astonish'd knight thus from the scarf retires, And the rash youth who dares his force admires, Then to the rest his beamy lance applies, And full of fury from the barrier flies.

Nor less impatient to the dreadful course The noble Cadwall urg'd his foaming horse: Meanwhile the trumpet's warlike clangor's rise, And gazing crowds assail with vows the skies. Some to the knight with fav'ring minds incline, Mov'd by his prowess past, and force divine: But more to noble Cadwall wish success. And chief the fair with happy omens bless; Those mov'd by novelty his cause embrace, These by his manly form, and youthful grace. They meet. As when th' impetuous hurricane Lifts the black billows of th' Atlantic main. Two ships, the sport of the destroying blast, While the loud surges lash the lab'ring mast. Encounter. Such the shock. Erect, unmov'd, His strength, and courage, each brave warrior prov'd; In fragments round the shiver'd lances fly; Upon the plain the flound'ring coursers lie. Now the brave youths their shining falchions wield, And bear before their manly breasts the shield.

The batter'd mail resounds, the combat grows, From ev'ry limb the painful moisture flows, Thick from their arms the fiery sparkles fly, Like the sad meteors of th' autumnal sky, Denouncing death; now foot to foot they fight, With eye attentive, and collected might; Now on the sword the rapid sword receive; Now with the lifted shield the stroke deceive. Ill brooks the knight, for hardy deeds renown'd, And still in ev'ry field with conquest crown'd, The lengthen'd conflict, and as fury fires Springs on the foe: the wary foe retires, And while from high the flaming steel descends, Quick glancing, shuns the ruin which impends. The knight bends forward with the frustrate blow: The guiltless weapon marks the sand below. Fierce Cadwall rushes on with dreadful cries, And with repeated strokes his rival plies; Till low in dust the golden eagle lies.

The heralds now the joyful victor lead, Where his brave hands receive the prize decreed. His beaver rais'd, the wond'ring crowd admire His form, his youthful bloom, his eye of fire. The royal maid the prize decreed bestows, While her fair cheek with warmer blushes glows. As in that season soft when April showers Have loos'd the pregnant glebe, and wak'd the flowers, Sweet summer by his warm caresses won, First meets the genial radiance of the sun; Now spreads her glowing charms, now sudden shrouds Her timid beauties in a veil of clouds: The gentle virgin feels the pleasing fire, And checks, but checks in vain, the fond desire. In Cadwall's breast while new emotions rise, Amidst triumphal shouts, the vanquish'd victor sighs.

But Archimago, since the fatal hour
Which rescu'd fair Melissa from his pow'r,
With anguish burn'd. And now he lifts on high
His wand of force to rend with storms the sky.

He chants the dreadful verse, whose thrilling sound Appals the spirits of th' abyss profound. As when, beneath some close concealment pent, The strengthen'd fires now struggle for a vent, First the light fumes in fleecy volumes rise, Then spreading blacken, and involve the skies; Dark clouds are roll'd on clouds, and night on night; Pale horror glares, and wildly shrieks affright; Then burst the flames. Obedient to the spell, Thus swarm the dreadful progeny of hell. In long succession, with terrific cries, Fiends, after fiends, detested forms, arise: In crowded ranks around the seer they stand; Fearless he sees, and waves his awful wand. Trembling the spectres stand. In thought profound His careful eyes he fixes on the ground; Then, for the mighty mischief he intends, A chosen spirit at his call attends. As when a tiger at the close of day Discerns, 'mid rustling boughs, th' approaching prey;

He waves his sinewy tail with eager joy, Impatient fury flashing from his eye. So joys the fiend, and claps his dusky plumes; Then at his master's high behest assumes The form of Cadwall. O'er his shoulders thrown. Such and so bright the crimson baldric shone; Such radiant arms his manly limbs invest; And such the honours of his lofty crest. Graceful his courser's fiery speed he reins; His better hand the pond'rous spear sustains. Now by the side of Paladour he stands, Where a tall oak the subject plain commands, The youth at ease diffus'd upon the ground, And list'ning to the flute's enchanting sound, Borne by light breezes from the neighb'ring grove. Resign'd his raptur'd soul to thoughts of love. And while he glows with recollected joy, Soft hopes of future bliss his mind employ. Sudden the courser's thund'ring pace alarms, And glitter through the shade the polish'd arms:

He sees the plumy helm, the deadly spear,

And these reproachful words assail his ear:

- \* Thus shall thy youth's auspicious promise end?
- ' And is it thus that Cadwall finds his friend?
- Lost to thyself, to virtue, and to fame,
- 'The stain of knighthood, of thy race the shame.
- Well dost thou seek the lone and silent shade;
- 'Thy friend deserted, and thy faith betray'd.'

Abash'd, oppress'd with sorrow and surprize,

- ' Spare thy reproof,' with fault'ring voice he cries.
- ' Ah spare thy just reproof! Ah yet forgive,
- ' Nor let thy kindled wrath for ever live!
- ' Behold, I follow thee. Delightful bow'rs,
- Where pleasure led the train of laughing hours,
- ' Farewell! Ah, yet th' involuntary sigh,
- ' Ah yet the tear that trembles in my eye!
- ' Dear that you are to this sad breast proclaim,
- ' Dearer than life, than all but virtuous fame.'

Thus while he speaks, upon his heaving breast

The mournful youth the twisted hauberk prest:

His brow once more a martial frown assumes. Dark with the beaming helmet's wavy plumes: His hand the spear and moony shield sustain, And his proud courser feels the curbing rein. And now with tearful, oft reverted eye, He marks from view the lessening landscape fly: While fancy paints to his disorder'd mind The lovely mourner, whom he leaves behind. From those fair eyes what streams of sorrow flow! And ah, how melting is her voice of woe! Now in his yielding breast love's gentle fires Revive, and each fond hope of fame expires; But still with keen reproach, or artful praise, The phantom urges, still the youth obeys. O'er many a mountain, many a plain they past, Till evening's dusky veil the skies o'ercast. Bleak heaths before them then in prospect lay; No tree was nigh, no taper's cheerful ray From sheltering cottage gleam'd, but shrill around Sings the keen blast, the gath'ring tempests sound. Then to the friendly form, with heaving breast,
The mournful Paladour his words addrest:
'Alas, my brother!'—Sudden from his sight
The faithless phantom vanish'd into night.
Aghast he stood. Now darkness wraps the skies,
Black clouds are roll'd on clouds, and winds arise;
The thunder roars; the livid lightning glares;
The cruel Archimage confest appears.
Secure of vengeance, with malignant smile,
The wizard eyes the victim of his guile,
And thus insults:—' Now brave again my power!

- ' Now call Melissa from her fragrant bower!
- ' Then hadst thou fear'd, when thy presumptuous arm
- ' Freed the proud fairy, and made vain my charm;
- What ills hadst thou escap'd! an endless train
- 'Of torment, sorrow, still increasing pain!
- ' Now vengeance seize him!' At the powerful sound

A troop of ghastly fiends the youth surround.

Full in his view their angry snakes they rear,

And pierce with threat'ning yell his tortur'd ear.

From their fell looks he turns his loathing eyes: Where'er he turns more dreadful forms arise. Then all at once in air they lift him high, Spread their dark pinions, and prepare to fly. A sudden whirlwind, with resistless sweep, Lays waste the realms, and lifts the foaming deep; Uproots the woods, o'erthrows th' embattled tow'rs, And strews with navies wreck'd th' affrighted shores. O'er half the globe they speed their rapid flight To where, beneath the pole, mysterious Night Reigns with eternal Frost, and man's pale race With strange and awful prodigies dismays. There is a cavern, whose portentous breath Gives forth a chillness like the damp of death: Before its entrance stands, with scowling brow, Fierce Scorn, dire usher to th' abode of Woe: Within, through all the fathomless extent, "The voice of weeping heard, and loud lament:" Reproach still urges, with incessant cries, And keen regret her venom'd scourge applies.

But, in the inmost gloom, a giant fiend
Musters the furies that his voice attend.
Pale Melancholy's faded form is there,
Grief, Terror, Rage, and Phrenzy's ghastly stare.
From the broad circles of his baleful eyes
Destruction flashes: who beholds him, dies.
This was that monstrous image which of yore,
Jove's awful daughter on her Ægis bore;
Which wither'd nations with portentous glare,
Gorgon the pest was call'd, but now Despair.

This doleful prison the revengeful mind
Of Archimage to Paladour assign'd;
Invok'd, with horrid rites, the pow'rs of hell,
And trac'd, with subtle art, the mystic spell.
But how young Cadwall, with Melissa's aid,
His dark designs with vengeance just repaid;
And Paladour beheld, with joyful eyes,
The smiling earth, the lustre of the skies;

Once more allow'd the best delights to prove,
Adorn'd with glory, blest with gentle love;
After great perils past, and labours long,
Must be the subject of a future song.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

#### THE

# BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO III.

## THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

## A TALE.

### CANTO III.

Soon as Melissa heard the shriek of woe,

And saw the lucid stream polluted flow;

While ev'ry flow'r reclin'd its languid head,

The trees around their leafy honours shed,

As touch'd by sudden frost, a sullen sound

Sang through the vale, and shook the groaning ground:

Alarm'd, the fairy the dread signs perceiv'd,

And knew the crime by Archimage achiev'd.

She burns with wrath, and swift through air she flies,

Like some bright meteor in autumnal skies.

But Cadwall, crown'd with splendid wreaths of fame,
And glowing now with passion's genial flame;
Oft for his Paladour to grief resign'd,
Revolv'd his fortunes with distracted mind.
Sudden, Melissa, like the gentle light
That tells the storm subsiding, meets his sight.

- Since the same cares our anxious thoughts divide,
- ' Behold, I bring thee aid,' the fairy cried.
- 'Sad Paladour, oppress'd by magic slight,
- 'Some dreary prison shuts from human sight;
- 'Where, vex'd by fiends, amid Tartarean gloom
- 'He loaths his life. But would'st thou learn his doom,
- ' My hand shall lead, where from th' enchanted ground
- ' Prophetic voices Merlin breathes around.
- ' (Worms have consum'd his corpse; his mighty mind
- 'Still dictates wisdom, and preserves mankind.)
- ' My tongue shall chant the verse which breaks the sleep
- 'Of death, and moves the spirits of the deep.
- ' Not that terrific sound, with forceful spell,
- Which binds the dark malignant pow'rs of hell,

- 'But such sweet music, such celestial airs,
- As win good angels to assist our pray'rs.'

Cadwall, amaz'd, beheld the heav'nly grace,

With dazzling beauty, beaming from her face,

Her awful pow'r with trembling voice confest,

And bow'd submissive to her high behest.

She smil'd superior, and with soothing art

Confirm'd his hope, and cheer'd his auxious heart:

And as they past o'er wilds and mountains hoar,

Still charm'd his raptur'd ear with various lore.

Now in a narrow vale they held their way:

Here through the boughs scarce pierc'd the quiv'ring ray,

Which on the streams pellucid surface play'd:

The stream, as if enamour'd of the shade,

Appears to sleep; but soon impetuous flows,

Where bare and jutting rocks his course oppose,

Which rear aloft to heav'n their rugged forms,

And challenge all the fury of the storms.

- 'Lo these,' she cried, 'the hills of Dynevoure,
- 'Through which the rapid waves of Barry roar.

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- ' See to the right what monstrous piles arise,
- ' Stones heap'd on stones, which pierce the louring skies.
- ' Each might be deem'd, it fills so vast a space,
- ' Some mountain hurl'd by that Titanian race.
- 'Lo, there a fearful chasm, from whence exhale
- Dank steaming mists, and deadly vapours pale.
- ' Approach, but cautious, lest the damp of death
- Benumb thy senses, and suppress thy breath.
- ' Some daring footstep may have pass'd the bound,
- 'But none, returning from th' abyss profound,
- ' Has ever yet divulg'd to human race
- 'The dreadful secrets of that impious place.
- ' Incline thine ear, and hark, what tumult grows
- 'On every side! What still repeated blows
- Strike on the anvil! How the furnace roars!
- ' How from the forge the hissing metal pours!
- 'Shrill yells, and angry shouts, and clamours rise,
- ' Mix'd with deep groans, and lamentable cries.
- 'These from o'erlabour'd spirits long of yore,
- ' Chain'd to the task by Merlin's magic pow'r;

- ' Proceed. 'Tis they that with impetuous sway,
- ' Have heav'd these rocky piles to upper day;
- 'Torn from the central earth. They strain; they toil;
- ' Heap flames on flames; in massy cauldrons boil
- ' Vast seas of molten brass; or pour around
- ! The metal, beat and shap'd, with thund'ring sound.
- ' Merlin, 'tis said, in his capacious mind,
- ' Some work surpassing human thought design'd;
- ' Some mighty work for sovereign beauty's sake,
- ' What time he lov'd the Lady of the Lake.
- ' Perhaps to bid, in this his favourite isle,
- ' With fruits of gold Hesperian gardens smile:
- ' Some glorious dome with matchless art to raise,
- ' To speak in future times his lady's praise:
- ' With walls of brass to fence the guarded land,
- ' Or join Ierne to the Cambrian strand.
- ' Vain man! whose folly boasts in wisdom's name!
- ' Vain man! whose power but works thy grief and shame!
- 'The faithless nymph with many an amorous wile,
- ' With many an honied word, and wreathed smile,'

- ' Allur'd the wizard to her secret bow'r,
- ' Surpriz'd, and made him captive to her pow'r.
- ' Then bids the spirits which around her stand,
- ' Convey her victim into fairy land.
- Ah, sad reward for love! Her cruel doom
- There clos'd him living in sepulchral gloom.
- 'Till his return the fiends to labour bound,
- ' With hideous ruin groaning earth confound:
- Excite the elements to monstrous war:
- ' (Heat, moisture, air, in dreadful conflict jar.)
- ' Restore to vapours their elastic force,
- 'To rend incumbent mountains in their course :
- ' And hurl vast seas upon the central fire,
- 'Till, rais'd in steam, the watery mass aspire,
- ' Level the lofty rocks, lift high the plain,
- And whelm whole kingdoms in the foaming main.
- 'Yet deem not that their mighty toils extend
- ' From age to age, directed to no end.
- ' Frail are the plans by mortal thought design'd,
- ' And weak and vain the wisest of mankind!

- \* But heav'n's unchanging, and unerring will,
- All things obey, and all events fulfill!
- Ev'n these malignant sprites, constrain'd by fate,
- To man, whom of heaven's creatures most they hate,
- ' Are instruments of good: unconscious still
- ' Of what they do, and only bent on ill:
- · From this fierce tumult particles combine,
- 'Of coal, and flint, calcareous, and saline:
- The principles from which each wondrous birth
- \* That with this robe of beauty clothes the earth,
- Proceeds. As this, or that prevails, the rose
- Gives forth her fragrance, or the violet blows,
- ' Springs the bright verdure, waves the golden grain,
- ' Or the majestic oak embrowns the plain.
- ' Hence too where space the porous earth supplies
- 'Sublim'd by heat, the steaming waters rise,
- 'Till near the cooler surface they subside,
- Burst forth in springs, in lucid rivers glide;
- ' Upon whose banks perpetual sweets appear,
- " And flowers, and fruits, and foliage, grace the year.

- ' Salubrious oft they flow, endu'd with force
- ' Of various minerals, gather'd in their course.
- 'The shepherd to the spring his lips applies;
- ' Unlook'd for health the healing spring supplies:
- 'The conscious swain his grateful homage pays,
- ' And pours his soul to heav'n in pray'r and praise.
- ' For, to the race of man, from lake and rill,
- 'The humble valley, and the lofty hill;
- 'The sunny champain, rich with fruits and grain;
- 'The gliding river; and the stormy main;
- ' In the still darkness of the fearful night;
- ' The moon's fair radiance; Hesper's dewy light;
- "The orient beams that fire the eastern skies;
- 'A God, a God, the voice of nature cries!
- 'On him, my son, rely. His aid implore.
- ' He only can thy Paladour restore.
- 'Thou can'st not err, if truth thy course direct,
- ' Nor perish if Almighty pow'r protect.'

Discoursing thus, they reach the fertile plain,

Where that fair river to th' Hibernian main

Directs his flood, and proudly o'er the stream, The lofty towers of Maridunum gleam. Not far from thence, deep in a shadowy dell, Dwelt the great master of the magic spell. What time, deceiv'd by that perfidious fay, He bade a long farewell to cheerful day. 'Twas here Melissa made the knight restrain His courser, and dismounting, fix the rein. 'Enter,' she cries, 'the cave. Whate'er betide, 'In heav'n, who favours virtuous deeds, confide.' Then leads the way. Abrupt the deep descent, Shagg'd with rude rocks, of fathomless extent, And dark with tenfold night. Yet might the eye Far off a faint, and glimm'ring ray descry; Like the bright worm that scares the village maid, Whose lover waits her in the lonely glade. Scarce has his foot o'erstepp'd the sacred bound, Some pow'r unseen uplifts him from the ground. So swift his motion, that it leaves behind The light, and rapid glances of the mind.

A few short minutes measure half the way, Which parts the centre of the earth from day. And now, before the knight's astonish'd eyes, Proud rooms of state in gorgeous beauty rise. From the mid space beams forth a dazzling light, Beyond the sun's meridian lustre bright. Nor err'd Ferrara's bard, a whose piercing mind The strange effect to magic art assign'd. By fairy hands the glitt'ring dome was rais'd; By fairy pow'r the radiant glory blaz'd. As Cadwall and Melissa nearer drew, Where stood the wizard's tomb reveal'd to view; Forth from the marble breathe melodious airs; The ghost, in strains divine, the will of fate declares; Reveals the subtle train, the guileful sprite, The doleful prison of the luckless knight; And all the terrors of that gloomy cave, Whose dreadful forms might well appall the brave.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ariosto.

- ' From yonder column, lo, a golden shield
- ' Sheds dazzling radiance from its ample field;
- ' Nor does its inner surface, polish'd bright,
- ' With force diminish'd, back return the light.
- ' Bind on thine arm the splendid orb, and know
- ' How vast a boon the fav'ring fates bestow.
- ' Though all the pow'rs beneath the earth who dwell;
- 'Though Hecat, threeform'd goddess, weave the spell;
- 'Whate'er illusion magic art may raise,
- ' Its mirror still unclouded truth displays.
- 'Grasp too yon sword. Less dreadful flam'd of yore
- 'The thund'ring weapon bright Escalibore, b
- 'When Uther's son, from lögerne's bed,c
- ' Foredoom'd a wond'rous birth, around him heap'd the dead.
- ' Proceed then fearless, where good omens lead:
- ' Proceed, and conquest crown thy gen'rous deed.'

b So called by Drayton.

e Et gravidam Arthuro fatali fraude lögernen. MILTON.

The prophet ceas'd. Th' exulting youth obeys,
Lifts the broad shield, the mighty sword displays.

Melissa waves her wand, and spirits bear
The nymph and chief again to upper air.

I pass the bold achievements of the knight;
The painful labours, and the hardy fight.

Scar'd by the terrors of the golden shield,
Pierc'd by th' enchanted sword, the monsters yield.

Ev'n that dire fury, seiz'd with wild affright,
Flies howling to the realms of ancient night,
Where midnight hags the lurid flame surround,
And darkness broods o'er Acheron d profound.

Meantime, behold the change! On every side

The rude rocks vanish, and the storms subside:

Where stood sharp icicles, and piles of snow,

Their blossom'd boughs the peach and almond shew;

While gentle gales the sweets of spring dispense,

And greet with balmy breath the joyful sense:

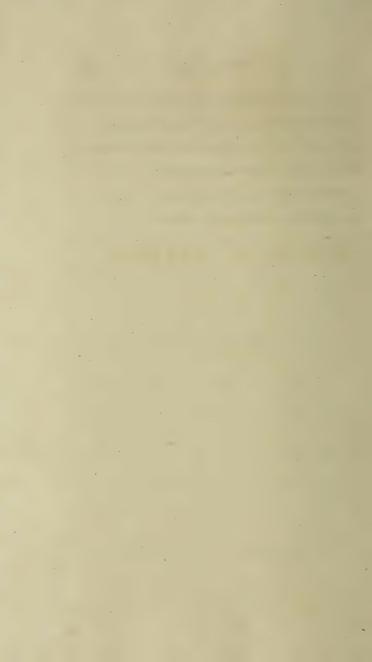
d And at the pit of Acheron

Meet me ete morn.

MACBETH.

The stream, o'er pebbles, murmuring takes its way,
Curl'd with the breeze, or glitt'ring with the day:
Soft verdure clothes the ground, and, as they tread,
The faëry cowslip bows her velvet head:
Aërial harps the notes of triumph raise,
And angel voices warble songs of praise,

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

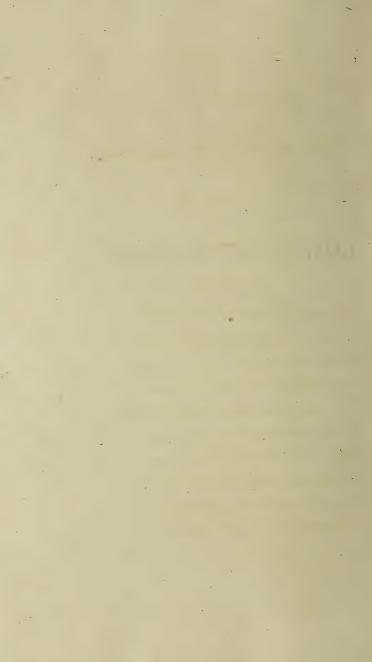


#### THE

# BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO IV.



## THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

## A TALE.

#### CANTO IV.

 $\Lambda_{\rm RRIV'D}$  in presence of th' immortal dame, The cheek of Paladour was ting'd with shame. He turn'd his head aside. His hand she press d,  $\Lambda_{\rm res}$  And smiling with benignant voice address'd.

- ' Full dearly, youth, thou hast experience bought;
- ' The punishment has sure aton'd the fault.
- ' Man is of wayward race, infirm of mind,
- ' Ardent in hope, but to the future blind:
- ' Urg'd by the stings of uncontroll'd desire,
- ' He courts destruction with a lover's fire:

- ' But heav'n still views him with paternal care,
- ' Forgives his wand'rings, pities his despair.
- 'Then full of hope, with no unmanly fears,
- ' Essay th' adventure of the vale of tears.
- ' Each path, which to my bow'r conducts, to thee
- . 'Is barr'd for ever by stern fate's decree,
  - 'Save only one; a long and painful way,
  - ' Where fraud ensnares, and prodigies dismay:
  - ' Danger with giant arm, and scowling eye,
  - ' Sends terror to the heart, and warns the foot to fly:
  - ' Acrasia's e spell the cheated sense beguiles,
  - ' And bright Morgana spreads destructive wiles:
  - 'But thou be bold, be firm.' With glowing heart

Brave Cadwall in th' adventure claims a part.

- " No chance again our fortunes shall divide;
- 'Thy toils I share,' the gen'rous warrior cried.

e The Alcina of Ariosto, and the Acrasia of Spenser, appear to be the same allegorical person, the genius of sensual pleasure. Morgana is the Fairy of Riches.

' Not so. To one the glory is reserv'd.' The Fay rejoins. 'Be heav'n's decree observ'd.' Reluctant he obeys; then clasps the youth, And binds upon his arm the shield of truth. Now see the noble Paladour bestride His bounding courser with a warrior's pride: To right, to left, his ample buckler bear, And brandish oft his long-unpractis'd spear. Parting at length with many a kind farewell, He plunges deep into a shadowy dell. From either side huge oaks with mingling boughs, Above his head a stately arch compose. There noon's bright radiance scarce dispels the night, And faintly marks the way with chequer'd light. Deep-musing he proceeds. And now more rare The trees their leafy summits lift in air; Sharp furze and purple heath the hills o'erspread, And jutting rocks appear with mossy head, Till one sad waste extends, where howls the storm, And famine brooding sits, with terrors ghastly form. VOL. II.

The felon's carcase withering in the air, Tells of strange deeds of horror acted there; And fancy listens, in the passing gale, While sad-complaining ghosts their fate bewail. Just then the clash of arms arous'd the knight, Clamour and cries, and tumult of the fight. And soon he sees, against an armed band, Where one, with sword alone, makes gallant stand: Who seems the chief bestrides a stately steed, And with loud voice commands the murd'rous deed. The gen'rous Paladour with fury glows, Nor stays to count the number of his foes: He rushes forward with indignant cries, And to the fight the felon crew defies. The chief oppos'd was haughty, bold, and strong; Well arm'd, and constant to maintain the wrong: He fixes in the rest his mighty spear, And spurs his steed, and meets the knight's career. Proud and secure he ran. The frustrate blow Glanc'd o'er the shoulder of his noble foe.

Through shield and breast-plate driv'n with surer aim, The lance of Paladour resistless came. Supine the felon tumbles on the ground, Spouts the black gore, his clanking arms resound. Soon as they saw their cruel master slain, Confus'd, and trembling, fled the dastard train: But he they late assaulted on the ground, Lay steep'd in blood, and gash'd with many a wound. Brave Paladour dismounting hastes to bring The cool wave, gushing fresh from living spring; To the parch'd lip the wholesome draught applies, And lightly sprinkles on the closing eyes; Then gently lifts, and rests upon his breast, The languid head, by death's cold weight opprest. The dying man drew forth a mournful sigh, And fix'd upon the knight his glassy eye:

- ' Blest be the warlike arm, whose pow'rful blow
- ' Aveng'd my wrongs, and laid the villain low.
- 'I die, nought grieving that my course is run;
- ' Force has achiev'd what sorrow else had done.'

He ceas'd, and with a groan his spirit fled;
The pious warrior's tears bedew'd the dead.
When lo, a youth and aged man drew near,
Two of the stranger's train, who, smit with fear
And overmatch'd, had safety sought in flight,
And, hiding in the brakes, beheld the fight.
As sorrowing each by his dead master stands,
His state and story Paladour demands.
The elder thus replies. 'Untimely slain,

- A noble knight is stretch'd upon the plain.
- ' Oft has his prowess been the theme of fame:
- ' Proud was his birth, and Lanval was his name.
- 'Who has not listen'd to the tuneful lay
- Of a fair knight, lov'd by a haughty Fay?
- ' For him with doleful neighings, ev'ry spring,
- 'The faithful Palfrey makes the meadow ring:
- ' But mov'd at length to pity, and forgive,
- 'The nymph relenting bade her lover live:
- ' Recall'd his senses, with ambrosial kiss,
- ' And fondly sooth'd him in the bow'r of bliss.

- Brave Lanval sprung from these. Though cold he lies,
- ' Ne'er on a better knight the sun shall rise.
- What need to tell how each Armoric lance
- By him was vanquish'd in the jousts of France;
- ' Or how, where Tweed, or Tay's fair waters flow,
- With matchless force he drove the barb'rous foe.
- 'Yet, humble in his love, a mortal dame
- ' First kindled in his breast affection's flame.
- ' He woo'd the fairest on Brigantian plains;
- 'The fairest maid the noblest knight obtains:
- 'So blest they seem'd it might have envy mov'd;
- 'But none would envy whom all prais'd and lov'd.
- ' At length the land resounds with loud alarms:
- ' His sovereign's mandate calls him forth to arms.
- ' Through all the castle spreads contagious grief;
- 'The frantic bride refuses all relief:
- ' Roll'd in the dust, with tresses torn, she lies,
- ' And often calls on death, with piteous cries.
- ' Brave Lanval's breast as keen affliction tears;
- ' But manly grief a firmer aspect wears.

- And now the trumpet sounds, the martial train
- 'In order'd files move slowly o'er the plain:
- ' When Lanval thus address'd the friend he lov'd,
- From childhood's playful hours his faith was prov'd:
- " Compell'd, to distant lands, in arms I go
- "To bear sharp combat to my country's foe.
- " Victorious still, in battle I delight,
- " Nor fear the issue of the dang'rous fight:
- "But other cares molest. This wide domain,
- " My fair paternal seat, this fertile plain,
- " I to thy care commit, and more than life,
- " And all this fair inheritance, my wife.
- " By all the pleasures of our early years!
- " By all thou lov'st! by all that life endears!
- "Fair fame, and faithful friends, thy mistress' smile,
- " And blest repose from honourable toil!
- "Untouch'd, unstain'd by fraud or force, restore
- "The sacred charge!" He said, and Urien swore.

- ' But mark the sequel of the sharneful tale,
- O'er truth and knighthood, lawless fires prevail;
- 'The friend from childhood prov'd was false, the wife was frail.
- And soon officious fame, with busy tongue,
- ' To noble Lanval's ear proclaim'd the wrong.
- At first he doubts, but as the rumour grew
- ' Confirm'd with circumstance, he deems it true.
- 'Stung to the soul, no more he brooks delay,
- ' Vaults on his steed, and measures back the way.
- \* No warder stands upon his castle wall,
- And the blast howls through his deserted hall.
- ' Waste are his fields, and all his fair domains
- ' A gloomy void, where desolation reigns.
- ' As when a ship, by furious tempest tost,
- ' Hangs on the rocks which guard some savage coast,
- ' High o'er the deck the rushing surges roar,
- ' And hurl her bursting sides against the shore:
- 'The refluent wave upon the barren strand
- ' Leaves some poor wounded wretch to crawl to land:

- Bleeding and faint, o'ercome with toil and pain,
- ' Hope gives him force the lofty cliff to gain:
- 6 But when around he throws his anxious eyes
- ' And sees one waste, extended to the skies;
- 'The tiger's foot upon the sand imprest,
- But man's abode no wreaths of smoke attest;
- ' His heart within him dies. So Lanval stood,
- ' Despair and horror chill'd the vital flood.
- A rustic now th' events in order tells,
- ' And all the guilt of that vile pair reveals.
- Stern wrath succeeds to grief. His mighty mind
- 'A vengeance equal to the crime design'd:
- ' His martial band to summon from afar,
- And crush his proud perfidious foe with war.
- But Urien soon a trusty spy alarms,
- ' And Lanval is beset with ambush'd arms.
- Foully, thou saw'st, his generous blood was spilt,
- 'And murther seal'd th' adulterous robber's guilt.'

With grief the knight, whose soul was just and good,

Heard the sad tale of treason and of blood:

And much he wonder'd, pondering in his mind,
The social wants connecting human kind;
A friend the trust of friendship should betray,
And, having injur'd, arm his hand to slay.

As forward on his destin'd way he fares,
The widening vale a brighter aspect wears.

Now many a shelter'd cottage meets his eyes,
And gentle slopes, with waving harvests, rise.
The cheerful villagers, their labour done,
With sport and song pursue the setting sun.
And many a youth, and many a rosy maid,
While twilight reigns, yet lingers in the glade.

Now Paladour a stately mansion sees,
Full richly dight, and girt with tufted trees.
The spacious hall a thousand tapers light,
And, darting far their beams, dispel the night;
While sweetest music floating in the air
Bespeaks no rude assembly feasting there.
The soothing sound the youthful warrior chears;
Already pass'd he deems the vale of tears:

And, scarce arriv'd before the lofty gate, With ready zeal th' officious menials wait: While one proclaims a noble warrior near, This holds his bridle, that receives his spear. The seneschal before him lowly bends, And o'er the court with seemly state attends. Their sports at once the fair assembly leave, And vie who with best welcome shall receive. Each dame was lovely, courteous ev'ry knight, Alike their graceful forms and sweet discourse invite. The banquet ended, decent mirth and joy Still for a while the gentle train employ: Here some fair nymph pours forth the tuneful song, And with soft rapture fills the list'ning throng: While those of knightly deeds rejoice to hear, These whisper tales of love in beauty's ear. At length a stripling shakes aloft the dice, And 'Who will dare to stand the throw?' he cries. At that most potent, that enchanting sound, The throng with eager haste comes crowding round;

The syren pours her tuneful throat in vain; The bard, unnotic'd, sounds th' heroic strain; And yielding beauty blushing longs to hear, But no seducing whisper meets her ear. The knight, whom no desires of gain infest, Perplex'd with doubtful : hought, retires to rest. And now the skies with day resplendent glow: He rises, but alas! to scenes of woe. The stripling lies before him cold in death, By his own frantic hand depriv'd of breath, A mother here, with grief and anguish wild, Strains to her throbbing breast her beggar'd child. Meanwhile, all unconcern'd, the thoughtless crew Prepare their wonted revels to renew. Them Paladour beholds with scorn and hate, And mounts his steed, and flies th' accursed gate. Nor far had ridden ere a knight and dame, Rich in attire, tow'rd that fair castle came; And passing blithe they seem'd, and laugh'd aloud: Their snorting palfreys pranc'd, as of their burthen proud. The courteous Paladour salutes them fair. Scarce bending, on they ride, with scornful air. A little farther Paladour descries, Where, near the way, a wretched female lies. Prone in the dust she lies, like one forlorn, Her hair dishevell'd, and her garments torn. Pitying he raises, and recalls her breath; But on her forehead hangs the damp of death: Sunk is her cheek, her faded lips are pale, And o'er her haggard eyes thick shades prevail. Yet seem'd she lovely in that piteous plight: A savage heart had melted at the sight. So droops a tender flower, which vernal rain Bedews, and gentle zephyrs sooth in vain: The passing share a secret wound has made: Fast ebbs its life, and all its beauties fade.

Not distant stood a mansion, large and fair,
Where all bespoke the master Fortune's care:
Thither the knight the fainting damsel bore:
The churl, with threat'ning voice, forbade the door.

Scarce Paladour his rising wrath contains;

From instant vengeance scarce his hand refrains;

But the sad damsel rais'd her languid head,

And thus, in broken accents, feebly said:

- 'Cease, gen'rous youth, ah cease this fruitless pain,
- ' My heart is grateful, but all aid is vain.
- ' A stranger's pity sooths my parting hour,
- While he for whom a father's curse I bore,
- 'Unmov'd beheld the bitter tears I shed,
- ' And left me, friendless, houseless, wanting bread.
- ' Even now, as faint beside the public way,
- ' Exhausted, famish'd, agoniz'd I lay,
- ' With the proud dame, from whom my sorrows flow,
- · He pass'd, he knew, and rudely mock'd my woe.
- 'I die. My breaking heart can bear no more:
- ' A moment yet, and all my pains are o'er.
- ' Not e'en this bitter pang can heal my fame :
- ' Oh might th' oblivious grave conceal my shame!'
  She spoke. She died. And Paladour, who saw
  Crimes following crimes, perverting nature's law,

Which love and charity enjoins to man,
To loath the whole degenerate race began:
Yet still he hopes Melissa's bower to gain
On earth, there only peace and virtue reign:
And gentle love in flowery fetters binds,
With faith that knows no change, congenial minds:
There truth and friendship dwell; and there alone
Fierce wrong and fraud, are but by rumour known,

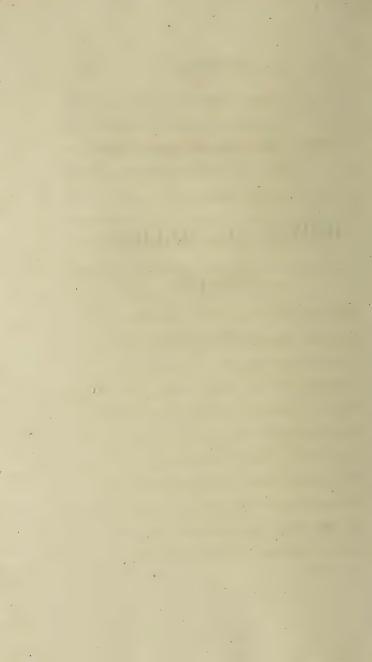
END OF CANTO THE FOURTH.

#### THE

## BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO V.



## THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

## ATALE.

### CANTO V.

Tempt we, with daring wing, a loftier flight!

Oh might some gentle muse, or lady bright,
Inspire, as when the peerless Gloriane

Stoop'd from her throne to hear the tuneful swain!
Fierce wars, and faithful love then moraliz'd his strain.

May no rude censure blast my feebler rhyme!

Great was the virtue of that antique time

When sheath'd in arms, and champion of the right,
Forth issu'd on the plain th' advent'rous knight.

Though pain and dangers glare athwart his way,
Nor pain, nor dangers, his firm soul dismay:

Nor from fair honour's path, and sacred truth,
Could siren pleasure lure the gen'rous youth.
Forth from the baleful treasury of hell
The foe of man then cull'd the magic spell.
Such as, exulting 'midst pale heaps of slain,
Erictho mutter'd on th' Emathian plain:
Or as Armida breath'd of softer power,
To bind Rinaldo in her fragrant bower.
Hence battlements and forests wrapp'd in fire;
"Gorgons, and hydras, and chimæras dire;"
Melodious sounds, soft looks, deluding smiles;
Soul-mining whispers sweet, and amorous wiles;
And, in the specious garb of virtue drest,
Corruption stealing to th' unguarded breast.

False Archimago saw, with fierce disdain,
His dæmons vanquish'd, his enchantments vain.
Ev'n then dire omens of impending fate
Chill'd all his soul with fear; but ranc'rous hate

f Lucan's Pharsalia.

g Milton.

Prevail'd, and in his unrelenting mind

More deadly fury rouz'd, and greater ills design'd.

No bound th' accursed thirst of vengeance knows,

Indulg'd, or frustrate, fiercer still it glows;

With blood insatiate, unsubdu'd by tears,

The pangs it can no more inflict it bears,

Preys on itself, and its own entrails tears!

He sought two sister nymphs, more fair than morn,
Adorn'd with every grace, and heav'nly born;
But false, perverse, and merciless of heart,
Deep skill'd in magic lore, and baneful art.
Hesperian poets, in immortal verse,
The woes they wrought in after days rehearse.
But not as yet Orlando's matchless might,
Morgana's giant guards had quell'd in fight:
Nor bold Rogero, on his flying steed,
Alcina's palace reach'd, and num'rous captives freed.
Alcina nam'd in Ariosto's strain,
Acrasia by Eliza's shepherd swain,

When, soaring now above the rustic throng,

He pour'd to future times his high mysterious song.

To these the seer complains; nor they refuse

Their ready aid, when hell-born malice sues.

With soften'd heart, which warring passions move, While just disdain with tender pity strove, Lo, where young Paladour pursues his way. Before him now a mighty forest lay, So thick with briers, and tangled thorns o'erspread, It seem'd as never mark'd by human tread, One track alone appear'd, athirst for blood, Nightly by which forth issued from the wood The savage prowling fierce, th' unwieldy bear, Or wolf with rapid pace and lurid glare. Back shrinks the restive steed. The knight applies The goading spur; but, cautious of surprize, Looks round, and firmly grasps his pond'rous spear. Th' obedient steed moves on, and snorting shakes with fear.

With toil he journied long, nor yet his ken Perceiv'd, through opening boughs, th' abode of men. Sudden he hears a lamentable cry, The piercing shriek of female agony. Loud as the hurricane's tremendous roar, Which hurls th' Atlantic on the Carrib shore. Some mighty power, with unresisted force, Makes the tall saplings bow before his course.h Beneath his thund'ring footsteps shakes the ground, The deep caves bellow, and the hills resound. Suspense and awe some minutes held the knight, But soon th' approaching giant tower'd in sight. Behind him thrown his bloody mace was slung; A lion's spoil was o'er his shoulder flung; And, through the darkness of his shaggy brow, His flaming eye-ball blasts the plain below. A struggling damsel in his grasp is borne, With hair dishevel'd, and with garments torn:

h \_\_\_\_\_ Dat euntibus ingens
Silva locum, magnoque cedunt virgulta fragore. VIRGIL.

Rude bonds her wrist, and snowy ancle press; The giant laughs, and mocks her sore distress; With screams she rends the air. Th' undaunted knight Threatens aloud, and dares th' unequal fight. But as, with furious stride, the foe drew near, Th' affrighted courser stops in mid career, Turns short, and scours with headlong speed the plain, Nor heeds his lord's command, nor curbing rein. Ill brooks the warrior that inglorious flight; He springs to earth, and waits on foot the fight: One arm with lifted shield his head protects; The right his lance's glitt'ring point directs; With bended knees he stands, and watchful eye, To shun th' assault, th' advantage to descry. The raging monster heaven and earth defies, And rushes on the knight with dreadful cries. It chanc'd, above the level of the field, A rocky fragment rose with fern conceal'd. It caught his foot, and stagg'ring on he came, Robb'd of his force, and frustrate of his aim.

The knight, who shun'd with nimble bound the foe, Beneath his lifted arm directs the blow: By fortune guided to a mortal part, Between the ribs it pass'd, and reach'd his heart. Loud was the roar, and terrible the cry, The falling giant hurl'd against the sky; Prone without sense the carcase fell, and beat Awhile the sounding earth with quiv'ring feet. Meantime with eager haste the knight unbinds The woeful dame, and calls the gentle winds Upon her brow, and swelling breast to blow, And bid once more the vital current flow, Suspended now by fear. With frequent sighs, At length the maid unclos'd her languid eyes: So breaks the vernal sun through show'ry skies. Scar'd at the steaming blood, and armed knight, Yet stern and dreadful from his recent fight, Low to the earth her trembling knee she bent With beating bosom, doubtful of th' event:

But when she saw the lawless giant slain,
And heard the victor speak in soothing strain;
Soon re-assur'd, fair hope and gentle joy
Smil'd on her lips, and lighten'd in her eye.
Her modest cheek suffus'd with lively red,
Thus to the knight, in humble guise, she said.

- ' Fair knight, heroic worth were ill repaid
- ' By grateful praises of a simple maid;
- But, know, I serve an high and peerless queen:
- ' Great is her power, and goddess-like her mien.
- 'The proud disturber of her gentle reign,
- ' Fierce as he was, and strong, thine arm has slain.
- ' Joys above price, immortal and divine,

Responsive to Apollo's golden lyre.

'Her voice bestows, and these shall sure be thine.'
While yet the damsel speaks, by just degrees
Harmonious sounds come floating in the breeze,
Sweet as the sirens in Sicilian seas;
Or as, in Tempe's vale, th' Aonian choir

The youth enraptur'd listens to the lay,
Unconscious following as it leads the way:
The dulcet lay, contriv'd with matchless art,
Each sense takes captive, and subdues the heart.
Sooth'd with the sound, he sees the rocks divide,
The tangled brakes recede on either side,
The wild thyme springs where'er he prints his feet,
While the south wind flings round the balmy sweet,
And, slowly gliding o'er the lucid stream,
Tempers with vapours thin the sultry beam.
On the slope bank luxuriant verdure grows,
And bowers of fragrant shade invite repose.
Seems there no cares intrude, no fears annoy,
But whisp'ring breezes prompt to gentle joy.

A lake before him wide extended lay,

Fair as heaven's pure expanse, and bright with day.

Upon the water's brink a damsel stood,

That seem'd the virgin goddess of the flood:

With downcast eyes she stood, and timid grace,

And blushes gave new beauty to her face;

About her soft lips play'd a dimpled smile, Of power to curb the strong, the wise beguile; While now and then, and almost as by chance, She darted on the knight a tender glance: His inmost soul the witching glance alarms; But she seems all unconscious of her charms. The rescu'd dame with out-spread arms she meets, And kindly, with a sister's fondness, greets. Then both, in courteous phrase, th' admiring knight To the fair palace of their queen invite. Beyond the silver lake's expanse it lies, 'And we thy willing guides.' Nor he denies. Then way'd that second maid her graceful hand; A gilded vessel soon, at her command, Appears self-mov'd, and quickly gains the land. They enter in. Nor wind it asks, nor tides; But, as instinct with life, o'er the smooth surface glides. Soft breath'd the gentle air; the gentle wave,

Rippling beside the keel, soft murmur gave.

Then, lest the way should tedious seem, and long,
The nymph, who rul'd the bark, rais'd many a song.
Sweet was her voice, and polish'd was her phrase,
And sweet the subject of her vary'd lays.
Of amorous wiles she sung, and rapturous joy,
The sportful triumphs of the Paphian boy,
Whose cares delight; whose very torments please;
Best meed of warlike toil; best charm of ease.

- ' Quit, thoughtless youth, thine armour's cumb'rous load!
- 'Not amid danger glory makes abode.
- 'Instruct thine eyes with eager love to glow;
- ' Bid from thy lip love's soft persuasion flow:
- 'The fleece of gold shall not alone be thine,
- ' But she, the royal maid, of form and mind divine.
- ' Though Mars great Hector's dauntless bosom fires,
- ' And wonders at the deeds himself inspires,
- ' Not less renown the blooming chief attends,
- ' Who, led by Venus, Helen's bed ascends.
- ' Blest youth, through time propitious powers prolong
- 'Thy joys, immortal as Mæonian song!

- ' The queen of beauty gave thee pow'r to please,
- ' Gay wit, and gentle speech, and graceful ease.
- ' Pallas with terror cloth'd Pelides' brow,
- ' Nor made him dreadful only to the foe:
- ' His awful look the boldest Greek alarms,
- ' And fair Briseis trembles in his arms.
- ' Fierce as he is his proudest boast is vain:
- The mighty victor falls, by Paris slain!

  The song insidious melts his manly mind,
  Amus'd at first, but soon to doubt inclin'd.

  Oh blissful lot! with wreaths of deathless fame,
  To twine fair Venus' gifts, and smiles of lovely dame.

  The nymph, now conscious of her power, with skill
  Winds round his heart, and captive holds his will;
  Suffus'd with woe, or panting with desire,
  Like Sappho, while she breathes her soul of fire:
  Or when more blithe she wakes the jovial lay,
  To festive mirth inclin'd, and youthful play.

  Delirious with sweet poison, thus the knight
  Plung'd in the snare. Meantime arose to sight

That island, where Alcina, in her bow'r New dight by spring, expects her paramour. Swift flew the gilded bark, and reach'd the fatal shore. A train of graceful youths, and maidens fair, To greet the noble guest kind welcome bear. Smooth was the way, and pleasant was the scene, Which led to the bright dwelling of the queen. From tufted groves, whose breath is balmy sweet, Birds with their wood-notes wild his coming greet, And the fresh herbage springs his steps to meet. Yet there the lion shakes his tawny mane, And frequent tigers stalk along the plain: Boars whet their tusks. That uncouth sight alarms Th' astonish'd warrior. He unsheaths his arms. Laugh'd those fair damsels, and rebuk'd the train Of savage beasts, who cow'ring fled amain, Or, crouching low, to lick their feet drew near, And gently fawn'd, expressing love and fear.

The palace now they reach'd. The festive sound Of harps his welcome told, and all around

Breath'd odours, while the fair attendants prest,
With gentle duty, from his manly breast
To draw the pond'rous armour. Loosely laid
On silken couch, and in soft vest array'd,
Supplied by eastern looms, where Ganges laves
Benares, which adores his sacred waves,
He yields his soul to bliss, nor ponders more,
Heroic deeds of arms, amid the battle's roar.
Then to the banquet, when the lunar beam,
Mingling with day, sheds o'er the unruffled stream
Soft light, he moves: gay flowers the path bestrew,
And hopes of unknown joys in his pleas'd bosom glow.

Then first his eyes Alcina's form adore.

Such golden Venus met her Belamour,

Whose annual wound, the flow'ry shore along,

The Syrian nymphs lament, in sweet, smooth dittied song.

Soft are the smiles which beam upon her face:

Soft smiles, but temper'd with majestic grace.

Now to her guest behold the dame present The nectar'd bowl, which he, alone intent On that fair face, scarce to his lips applies, But drinks large draughts of passion from her eyes. Shrin'd in a rich pavilion sat the queen: Without, a strange and monstrous rout was seen, Of savage forms all kinds: the shaggy bear, Such as the seaman views, astonish'd, where, Near to the pole, his dark and cheerless reign Stern Winter holds: the terror of the plain. Through which the consecrated Ganges pours His waters, there the mighty tiger lours, Term'd royal, for his strength and matchless sway, From the thick jungle springing on his prey: There the voracious wolf; the fox obscene; The mimic ape appear'd; and there was seen The sluggish ass; the lion's lordly pride; The rank and bearded goat; and, by his side, The swine, on offal vile, and garbage foul, Wallowing profuse, which gluts his filthy soul. From stalls and dens, let loose, they swarm, they pour Through all the court, and with fierce haste devour Th' allotted food. Echoes with loud uproar

The roof. Now fury grows, and thirst of blood:

Dreadful, with bristled mane, the lion stood:

The tiger crouching near, with fiery eyes,

And waving tail, marks out his trembling prize.

The fair enchantress view'd intent awhile

The herd, and mock'd them with disdainful smile,

Then bent her angry brow. The keeper's voice,

And scourge resounds, and the rude rabble flies.

Much marvell'd at that sight the noble youth:

Doubt fill'd his mind. But now the shield of truth,
With his neglected armour, thrown aside,
Lay useless; while Alcina, like a bride,
Soft blooming, breathing love, and fond desire,
Shot through each trembling nerve resistless fire.
Thus, in delicious madness, many a day
Flew swiftly by. Yet not without allay
The bliss, while often in the lonely hour
The angel Conscience on his ear would pour
His warning, and with forceful touch pourtray'd
Melissa's bower, and his deserted maid.

Such musings fill'd his mind, when, lo, it chanc'd
His eye upon the lofty chamber glanc'd,
Where, all deform'd with rust, in order'd files
Stood rang'd of many a luckless knight the spoils.
Anxious he sought his own. And soon their light,
Not yet by time grown dim, attracts his sight.
Eager he springs to seize. With shrieks and cries
The palace rings, and all around him rise
Terrific forms, which clubs and lances wield,
And crowd to thwart, and drive him from the shield.
He, rouz'd by hope, their threats and force disdains;
Presses undaunted on, and the bright prize obtains.

Th' illusion fled. No more, with wanton wing,
Light zephyrs fling around the balmy spring;
No leafy bower excludes the sultry beam;
No vale is vocal with the murmuring stream;
Rich chambers, breathing late Arabia's gale,
Gloomy and waste, infectious stench exhale.
And that fair dame, with vice polluted breast,
His new purg'd eyes, and chasten'd thoughts detest;

Then in the shield's clear mirror he surveys

The savage beastly crew. The shield displays

Forms once in human semblance cast, defac'd

By arts of that curs'd witch, and foul disgrac'd.

Around their hearts, base, sordid passions twine

Indissoluble bonds, and quench the spark divine.

Mov'd at the sight, he sheds some pitying tears,
Then, joyful at the danger 'scap'd, he fares
Forth on his way, with courage undismay'd,
And prudence by experience firmer made,

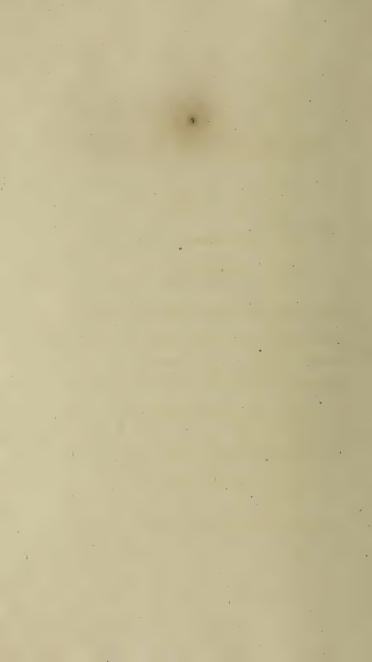
END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

THE

# BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO VI.



### THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

#### A TALE.

#### CANTO VI.

Meantime th' enchantress, frustrate of her prey, Cuts through the liquid air her rapid way, Borne on the dragon's wing. So fled of yore Medea from Corinthus' blazing tow'r, With parricide yet reeking, breathing still Vengeance, and meditating future ill. Soon to Morgana's glitt'ring dome she came; Intent on spells of pow'r she found the dame. Upon th' unhallow'd altar shone the fire, The flames and sparkles to the roof aspire.

A cauldron in the midst, whose fatal womb

Matur'd the seeds of mischief yet to come.

Beside it Archimago stood, and threw

Th' ingredients of the charm in order due.

And oft he paus'd, and wav'd his wand amain,

While the fell sisters rais'd the magic strain.

With smooth deceit was mix'd the flatt'ring art;

Pride and self-love, corrupters of the heart;

The lust of pow'r; and the vain thirst of fame;

And avarice, unpitying, void of shame.

Dark fiends, the charm to perfect, round them throng,

Mov'd by the terrors of the mystic song.

Long time their arts were vain. The youthful knight Was prudent, cautious, and unmatch'd in fight. Through toil, at last, of the long irksome way, Worn, and oppress'd with heaviest sleep he lay. They fling their spells abroad. Around his head Light phantoms gather, and illusions spread. But chief their care was bent to reave the youth Of his bright shield. What could they fear like truth?

From thing so holy must their hands refrain,

Nor dare to violate with touch profane:

Yet, what they may, with subtle art they frame

Its like in form, another and the same.

Not more exact that snowy semblance bright,

Which erst deceiv'd full many a fairy knight;

Till, from her spotted side recoiling fell

The girdle of the fairest Florimell.

They place it near, that caught by specious shew,

Or negligent, he may his guard forego.

Around them next a veil of mist they threw,

Intent the progress of their spell to view.

Sudden, from many an instrument of war,
Triumphant symphonies resound afar.

Near and more near the swelling music comes;
Ring the loud cymbals, roll the rattling drums;
And now the trumpet's cheerful clangors rise;
And now the shout of thousands rends the skies.

Starts Paladour from sleep, with hurry'd speed
Seizes his armour, springs upon his steed:
Then laugh'd his foes, who saw their wiles succeed.

And, lo, a pompous pageant moves along; Far as the eye can reach extends the throng: The heralds in their various garb appear, With pursuivants and serjeants in the rear. The robes of peace, with armour mix'd, declare Joy animates the march, not sanguine war. Troops of bold knights their glitt'ring crests display, Their prancing coursers spurn the echoing way: Then senators with grave majestic gait, That speak the greatness of a mighty state; Courtiers, by ensigns of high office known, Such as become a proud imperial throne; And lovely dames, inspiring soft delight, While dress with nature strives which most shall charm the sight.

High in the midst a gallant knight is seen,
Erect his port, and confident his mien:
Sublime upon a golden car he rides;
On either hand the gazing throng divides:
Eight steeds the chariot draw, and snorting bound,
And champ their bits, and fling the foam around.

Before unnumber'd minstrels lift their voice,
And virgin choirs in sweetest notes rejoice:
While this was still the burthen of the song,

- ' Graceful as Phœbus, as Alcides strong,
- 'Empire to thee, and beauty's smile belong.'

  The crowd give way, and the procession past

Close in, and follow with rude clam'rous haste.

Much wonder'd Paladour, and sought to know

The great occasion of that splendid shew.

He ask'd a youth, who seem'd of gentle kind; The courteous stranger bow'd, and thus rejoin'd:

- ' Illustrious knight, the pageant thou hast seen,
- ' Proclaims the wedding of our glorious queen.
- 'The bridegroom we conduct, whose fame in arms
- ' Deserves the guerdon of immortal charms.
- \* And is the splendour of her ancient throne,
- ' And all her blissful realm to thee unknown?
- ' Lo rich Pactolus rolls o'er sands of gold;
- 'Sabea's incense, India's gems, behold;

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- ' Each various region's various wealth explore,
- ' Or bring the son of David's vaunted store;
- 'Or all combin'd; unmatch'd would still remain
- 'The mighty treasures of our sovereign's reign.
- 'With time coëval, the vast heaps appear
- 'Still undiminish'd, each succeeding year.
- 'Three lovely nymphs attend upon her state: i
- 'What tongue of man their beauty shall relate?
- 'Oh, far less charming in the Idalian grove,
- 'The sister graces, and the queen of love:
- ' Or rather here the graces learn to please,
- ' And golden Venus borrows charms from these.
- ' Such is their power, their magic smiles dispense
- Fair forms, sweet sounds, whatever sooths the sense;
- 'Whatever curious, useful, or refin'd,
- 'Instructs, illumines, and delights the mind.
- ' But come, thyself the royal court behold;
- 'The queen decrees a tournament to hold.

i The Fine Arts, Learning, and Good-breeding.

- Four days consum'd in banquet and in fight,
- 'The fifth is destin'd to the nuptial rite.'

Soon Paladour assents, the tale has fir'd

His soul, and boundless thirst of fame inspir'd.

Proceeds meanwhile the stranger to relate

What evils vex, what dangers threat the state.

- ' Here envy lurks, there force and vengeance storm,
- ' And there ambition lifts his giant form;
- But now, restrain'd by that victorious arm,
- ' No clouds of war the tranquil land alarm;
- 'The tumults of the troubled ocean cease,
- ' And sleeps the tempest in reluctant peace.'

But still the guardian fairy, hov'ring near,

Watch'd o'er her fav'rite knight with ceaseless care;

The sacred shield to noble Cadwall's hands

She gave, and thus to willing ears commands;

- ' Haste, mount thy steed, and grasp th' enchanted blade,
- ' The sorcerer's towers with instant force invade.
- ' Ev'n now, ev'n now, our fell malicious foes
- With snares th' unconscious Paladour enclose:

- 'But his lov'd head I will myself protect,
- 'Their spells unravel, and their charms detect.
- ' And well I trust Morgana's arts shall fail,
- ' And truth and virtue against hell prevail.'

No need to tell with what a gracious air,
The queen to Paladour gave welcome fair.
Four times shrill clarions, with the dawning day,
Rous'd noble knights their prowess to display.
Four times victorious, in the martial game,
Brave Paladour triumphant notes proclaim.
Four evenings saw th' illustrious train prolong
The feast, and Paladour the theme of song.

Now the fifth morning rose, and smil'd so fair,
So fragrant and so pure the gentle air,
It seem'd that, with auspicious influence sweet,
Those nuptials nature's self-design'd to greet.
And when, the throng'd spectators all dispos'd
In order due, the tumult was compos'd;
The bright Morgana in her royal place,
Shone with such modest, yet majestic grace,

The gazing crowd stood fix'd in fond amaze, And ev'ry rapturous voice breaks forth in praise. Rich gifts, from many a tributary king, Ambassadors in solemn order bring, By heralds led. Each, in his master's name, Harangues in turn the fair imperial dame: Then to the bridegroom, where he sits in state, They turn, and his great actions celebrate: But chief they hail him fortune's fav'rite care, Blest with a gift, more excellent and rare Than ever mortal yet from heav'n obtain'd, Than poets fabling fancy ever feign'd. As when some stately stream its current leads Through ancient groves, and flow'r-bespangled meads, If on the bank a cliff with stately brow, Breasting the wave, surveys the plain below, The master there, to spread through time his praise, Some fair and stately dome decrees to raise: But, through the soil the moisture making way, Shakes the high mound with unperceiv'd decay;

While, ev'ry hour, the never-ceasing tide Beneath some fragment severs from the side, Till many a gaping fissure rends the wall, And the whole fabric totters to its fall. So Paladour drinks in at ev'ry vein, Through ev'ry sense, the heart-corrupting bane. Now wealth and pomp allure his fond desire; Now love of praise and emulation fire; And, as the queen in all her charms appears, Dark envy stings, and jealous fury tears. Malignant passions! whose detested pow'r Blots from his mind Melissa's tranquil bow'r. And, scarce restrain'd by decent sense of right, He burns with fierce impatience for the fight: ' From arms my rival's proud pretensions flow, ' As just my claim, who never fear'd a foe.'

The native subjects next their homage pay;
Successive they approach in meet array,
Marshall'd with care. Great lords their offerings bear,
And warlike troops in glitt'ring arms appear.

The counsellors and judges of the land Bow to the throne, and rang'd around it stand. Then deputies from many a city fair, Whose splendid train and gifts their wealth declare; And royal companies of merchants pour From earth's remotest bounds, a precious store. The empire, where the yellow river flows, And cruel sires their progeny expose, Its glossy silk, and rich with varied dyes And varied forms, its porcelain supplies: Her lacquer'd ware Japan: Arabia yields The perfume of her fam'd Sabean fields: The gorgeous east her glitt'ring gems bestows, Her fragrant wood that emulates the rose, Her precious gums: the Arctic region cold, Her furs; and Afric, elephant and gold.

This proud procession pass'd, lo, next advanc'd
Those three fair nymphs. Each heart with rapture danc'd.
The first came forth, and graceful mov'd along,
Confess'd a goddess by the gazing throng.

Upon her brow a laurel wreath she wore, A golden wand in her fair hand she bore; While, like the am'rous turtle's varying breast, The colours shifted of her airy vest; A dazzling lustre sparkled from her eyes; Earth, the unfathom'd sea, and boundless skies Her glance pervades, and, 'midst the realms of light, New modes of being sees in vision bright. She wav'd the golden wand, and straight to view The spacious halls more large and splendid grew, Fair columns rise, and graceful arches bend, And rich with gold the fretted roofs ascend. Not Corinth, when in all her pride she shone; Not fam'd Palmyra, great Zenobia's throne; Minerva's city, queen of arts refin'd; Or Rome, the mighty mistress of mankind; So proud a structure saw, so nobly grac'd With rich materials, and proportions chaste: She wav'd the golden wand, and, at her call, Obedient colours clothe the lofty wall:

All forms, all hues, which nature owns display;
The shades of evining, and the blaze of day:
While wonding eyes with holy awe behold
Kings, heroes, patriots, sages, famid of old:
Jove bends his sable brows; and breathing joy,
The queen of beauty meets the Syrian boy:
The queen of beauty in her Paphian bowers,
When love has dress'd her fragrant couch with flowers.
Again she waves her wand,—the ductile brass
Flows into shape, and lives the marble mass.
The gods their majesty no more conceal,
And beauty's perfect form to mortal sense reveal.

The second nymph with mien more awful came,
About her temples play'd a lambent flame,
Witness of heav'nly birth. Yet mark of pow'r,
Sceptre, or rod, or circlet, none she bore.
But by one hand sustain'd a book appear'd,
A polish'd mirror in her right she rear'd.
There, to th' inquiring mind, the goddess brings,
In clear reflexion, all created things.

She stood before the footstool of the queen: She spoke, and lo, a mimic heav'n was seen. There the great father of the circling years, The glorious sun in all his state appears. Round him, rejoicing in his vital force, The planets roll in their appointed course. Earth meets exulting his prolific ray. And opens all her bosom to the day. Then shone the mistress of the peaceful hour, Of softer influence, not inferior pow'r: She from each clime collected brings the dew, Whose fragrant show'rs the fertile glebe renew, The mighty waters flow beneath her sway, And swelling tides her constant rule obey. Next see the nymph the sacred page disclose, Where past events in order just repose. Before the royal seat appears unroll'd The long succession of the years of old.

- ' Whatever change beyond the reach of thought,
- ' In earth or heav'n, the wizard Time has wrought;' k

k Collins.

Whate'er of science patient search has scann'd; Whate'er vain man's unresting mind has plann'd; The statesman's labours, and the warrior's rage; Recorded stand in that illumin'd page, Which gives, unbought by danger or by pain, The wisdom for which thousands toil in vain. The goddess then invokes th' immortal nine, Daughters of memory, of race divine. Sweet, yet sonorous, was the varied song, And still the echoing roofs the strain prolong. Arms were the theme, and wealth and mighty sway, And sovereign beauty, which ev'n gods obey. The throng assenting loud applauses raise, With smiles the queen receives the artful praise.

Then fresh and radiant as the early dawn,
When first with glitt'ring drops it decks the lawn;
And as the southern air, on fluttering wing,
Kisses the tender blossoms of the spring;
So lightly forth that third fair sister trips,
A smile like Hebe's on her rosy lips.

Iris had dipp'd the many colour'd vest, That, waving, half conceal'd her lovely breast; Her slender fingers held with matchless grace, Fill'd with nectareous dew, a crystal vase, From which some drops to reach the queen she threw, And swiftly round the fair assembly flew, Soft gliding, with a soul-enchanting air, And sprinkling still the precious moisture rare; Then sought her sisters with a fond embrace, Who gaz'd delighted on her charming face. Such potency was in that heav'nly dew, What fairest seem'd before, now fairer grew; With more enchanting beauty shone the queen; More winning grace in those bright nymphs was seen; Sweet dreams of bliss each raptur'd mind employ, And ev'ry heart expands with love and joy.

Vain flattering dreams, and transient hopes of man!
Sudden through all the crowd a murmur ran.
While some are struck with terror and amaze,
These eagerly inquire, those lean to gaze.

Now from without resounds a fearful cry,

Some rush into the hall, while some prepare to fly.

Breathless with terror, lo, before the throne,

A messenger. He seems transform'd to stone.

With gaping mouth he stands, and haggard eye;

Upon his lips th' unfinish'd accents die.

Then near at hand was heard, unknown before,

Of barbarous instruments a dreadful roar.

Less horrible from Ætna's depth the noise,

When fell Typhœus lifts his impious voice:

Torrents of fire the thund'ring mountain pours,

And nations shriek, whom one vast grave devours.

Already now before the portal stand,

And throng the steps, a fierce and savage band.

Black on their shoulders hung their matted hair,

Large plates of brass shone with disast'rous glare,

On ev'ry breast, and ev'ry hand sustain'd

A ponderous spear with marks of blood distain'd;

All of gigantic mould, and dusky hue,

Mighty of limb, and terrible to view.

Nor seem'd their substance flesh, but living brass,
Such as some noble artist forms the mass
Of metal fus'd, and shews to wond'ring eyes
Enceladus, who highest Jove defies.
Their gloomy eyes askance gave dreadful light:
Then parting their long files to left and right,
For one of more distinguish'd rank they made
Large way. Without leave ask'd, he march'd, nor
staid

His haughty step, till to the queen he bow'd;

Then spoke: his voice appall'd the trembling crowd.

- 'The fame, oh queen, of thy bright-beaming eyes
- A mighty lover brings from other skies!
- ' His sceptre awes, beneath the southern pole,
- A people, great in arms, and proud of soul:
- '  $\Lambda$  people, whose unconquer'd strength disdains
- 'The puny tribes o'er which Arcturus reigns.
- 'This awful monarch wooes thee to his throne:
- 'Thy matchless charms 'tis he deserves alone.

- 'If any, rash or mad, dispute his right,
- ' For thee he deigns to prove his force in fight.
- 'The proudest courage, well I ween, shall fly,
- ' Before one glance of his terrific eye.'

While yet he speaks, the Austral king drew nigh.

Upon an elephant's huge back he rode;

Th' enormous beast seem'd conscious of the load.

As flame two beacons when the tempest roars,

Forewarning mariners of dang'rous shores,

Or quicksands in the channel which divides

Britain and Gallia, with alternate tides;

Eternal monument of wrath divine,

'Gainst Goodwin, faithless earl, and his perfidious line.

So flam'd the giant's sanguine eyes: his hair,
And ample beard, stream'd dreadful on the air;
His limbs were cas'd in plates of steel and gold,
Of price unsumm'd, and dazzling to behold;
Six arms, by threes on either side array'd;
Six mortal weapons, brandish'd high, display'd:

Now this, now that, inflicts the fatal blow, The sword, the spear, the poleax, and the bow, Jav'lin, and pond'rous mace. Nor needed shield, When one stern will so many arms could wield. A sight so heart-appalling never man Beheld. Pale horror through th' assembly ran. With cheek all faded, and well acted fears, The false Morgana sate dissolv'd in tears; And while the king demands his trembling prize, Turns on the bridegroom her imploring eyes. Him all his daring, all his pride forsook, And ev'ry recreant limb with terror shook. Not so the Briton knight. With active bound He leaps to earth, his clanging arms resound, And full of hope, with bosom beating high, Burns for the fight, nor doubts of victory. So when a bull, collecting fury, stands, Bellowing presents his horns, and spurns the sands; The fearless dog, which Britain only rears, With eager joy the call to combat hears:

He marks his mighty foe, and coursing round, Springs to his throat, and drags him to the ground.

Just at that moment, terror in her eye,

Morgana starting gave a piercing cry;

Thunder'd the heaven, and o'er the palace fell

Thick darkness; far resounds a dismal yell.

Then breaking quick, the fogs are roll'd away;

Shines forth again the cheering orb of day.

But the proud city, and the royal throne,

The dame that with such peerless beauty shone,

Appear no more. Alike the bridegroom knight

And giant monarch vanish from his sight;

And Paladour beholds where through the air

Morgana's chariot winged dragons bear.

The noble Cadwall with undaunted breast,
Well had perform'd Melissa's high behest.
And Archimago, bent on vengeance, found
The purpos'd mischief on himself rebound.
The shield of truth disclos'd the master spell:
The knight revers'd it, and th' enchantment fell.

Then smit with frantic fear the wizard fled,

And call'd the rocks to hide his guilty head.

In vain. The spirits seize, and whirl in air,

To plunge him in the cavern of despair;

Condemn'd through many a painful age to feel

Th' avenging furies, with their whips of steel:

Till by the powers of darkness rais'd again

With poisonous guile to taint the hearts of men;

On the Red Cross insensate war to wage;

And spotless truth pursue with unavailing rage.

Now Paladour, whom shame and joy divide,
Beholds his brother, and his fairy guide.

'Lo here,' Melissa cried, 'the royal seat,
'For which thy heart could change my calm retreat!
'Lo, here, Morgana's faithless wiles reveal'd!'
Then full before him plac'd the sacred shield.
Swift each delusive colour melts away,
And bursts upon his soul prophetic day.
He look'd and saw a narrow path, which led
Through a dark vale, with rugged rocks o'erspread;

A precipice abrupt on either side; Above, before, perpetual mists reside; Behind, more awful than the thunders roar, A voice proclaims aloud, ye turn no more. Sad lamentations sound, and plaintive sighs, Deep smother'd groans, and agonizing cries; And ev'ry where the ministers of fate, Terrific forms, with threat'ning aspect wait: Dark Envy's livid hue, and snaky hair; Oppression, Want, and heart-corroding Care, And restless Jealousy, and frantic Fear; Treason and Fraud, and stern Revenge appear; Despair, and Superstition's sullen brow, And vain Regret, Remorse, and endless Woe: One portal midst the gloom is seen to rear Its front, now distant, now approaching near: But there the king of terrors stands confest, And hope itself with horror fills the breast.

The careful fairy still the knight survey'd, And, ere despondence could his soul invade,

- 'Behold,' she cried, 'where yonder glimmering ray
- ' Shews yet another passage to the day;
- ' Proceed, nor yield to fear. The noble mind
- ' Compels reluctant fortune to be kind.
- ' No more let vain desires thy purpose bend,
- ' And heav'nly guards shall lead thee and defend.'

She vanish'd. Nor was noble Cadwall there:

He too, like some vain shadow, lost in air.

The warrior paus'd. Meantime the glimmering light

By slow degrees gain'd on the cheerless night.

Forward he mov'd, and, fill'd with holy awe,

Before him soon a shining vision saw.

Less splendid in the rapt enthusiast's dream,

By sacred Meles, or the Syrian stream,

Seem'd Juno, consort of the thund'ring lord,

Or bright Astarte, as heav'n's queen ador'd.

A book she held: unutterable day

Shed from the sacred page a glorious ray:

The stars compos'd her crown: her sweeping vest

Heaven's purest azure: and upon her breast

What seem'd a sun glow'd radiant: mercy's throne
Her forehead: and unclouded wisdom shone
In her majestic eyes. Upon her state
Life and immortal joy, her handmaids, wait.
The harmonies of heav'n give forth their voice,
And shouting angels bid the world rejoice—
Glory in the highest to th' eternal King!
On earth to men good will and peace! they sing.

Benignant was the smile with which she rais'd
The knight, who, lost in awe and wonder, gaz'd.
From her celestial touch new vigour flow'd
Through all his limbs: his heart with rapture glow'd.
Smooth was the way bestrew'd with asphodel,
And ev'ry flower grateful to sight or smell,
While the pure æther, and the cloudless sky,
Inspir'd content, and hope, and mental joy.
Thus with kind heav'n to friend in happy hour,
Once more he reach'd Melissa's charming bow'r.
The choir of lovely dames his coming greet
With joyful symphonies, and voices sweet;

Delighted friendship hails: while Cadwall prest His long-lost brother to his manly breast, "Welcome! thy toils are past!" Melissa cries, " And blissful years in fair succession rise. " Fall'n is the foe, and glorious is the meed, "Due to thy pitying heart, and gen'rous deed." As when wide-wasting fires, with rapid sway, Spread through the village ruin and dismay; And, plung'd in deep despair, the swain surveys, Pour'd on his smoking roof, the bickering blaze; Sudden the seraph Mercy, sent from high, Unbars the adverse portals of the sky, And fav'ring gales the flaming tempest bear To waste its harmless fury on the air: Swift through his frame the bounding spirits flow, Joy fills his glowing heart, and sparkles on his brow. So Paladour rejoiced. But still his breast One anxious thought, one tender dread confest.

Where was the matchless maid? Did proud disdain

Avert her steps, or virgin fears restrain?

Thus musing, through the well-known walks he stray'd, The rosy bower, the green, and fragrant glade, Till she he sought, as fair as orient dawn, When its first radiance lights the dewy lawn, Appear'd in view. The maid, with graceful pride, Nor met his eager step, nor turn'd aside. Somewhat of anger too her eyes declare; But gentle is the anger of the fair. Conscious of worth, and willing to be woo'd, Soft blushing like the Sestian nymph she stood, When young Leander pressing to her side Whisper'd his plea of love, and won his nightly bride. Nor Paladour in vain the damsel mov'd; Silent she heard, relented, and approv'd. The blissful bow'r with gratulation rung, And spirits, call'd from heav'n, the spousal sung. From that auspicious union sprang a race, Brave, beauteous, rich in virtue, and in grace. Delighted Paladour with pride reviews The glory which his progeny renews;

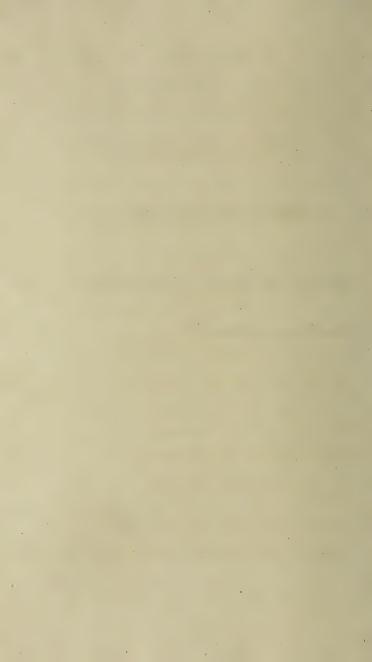
And, nobly true to friendship's holy laws,
Scarce with less transport hears the loud applause
Which nations shout, when, full of martial fire,
The sons of Cadwall emulate their sire.
Thus flew the joyous years, while o'er his head
Age, unperceiv'd, her snow full lightly spread,
Till he, who leads the spirits of the blest,
The gentle angel, to eternal rest,
Unbarr'd the golden gates, and bade him shine,
Rich in eternal youth, and heir of bliss divine.

## THE STATUES;

OR, THE

## STORY OF ZEYNU 'LASNAM.

CANTO I.



### THE STATUES;

OR, THE

## STORY OF ZEYNU 'LASNÂM.

#### CANTO I.

Deep was the sorrow through Bassora spread;

A nation mourning for its father dead.

Such was the prince who late the sceptre sway'd;

Gladly the people whom they lov'd obey'd.

The sentiment was sorrow, not despair;

For great the promise of the kingdom's heir.

His form was graceful, and a noble mind

Beam'd from his eyes, at once resolv'd and kind:

Expert, and brave in arms, the prince appears

With various knowledge fraught beyond his years;

And (which the public gaze attracted more)
A name of dark mysterious sense he bore,
Zeynu 'lAsnâm,' importing, in the tongue
In which the prophet of the Koreish' sung,
The glory of the Statues. It was giv'n,
(So fame reported) by command of heav'n,
With prophecies obscure, and omens dread
Of strange events, among the vulgar spread;
But all portending to the prince a fate
Distinguish'd, and, though full of danger, great.
The subjects hop'd the faith, and wisdom try'd
Of the vizier, his early steps might guide;

b Zeynu 'lAsnaum. The Arabic words signify the ornament of Statues, and the proper figure of the words is Zeynu al Asnaum; u or oo, is the termination of the noun; al, is the article; but the Arabians, contrary to the practice of the European nations, make the elision of the vowel of the second word, and incorporate, as it were, the second word with the first, so that the strict pronunciation is Zeynul Asnaum. The long vowel in the concluding syllable of Asnaum denotes the plural number. According to the analogy of the Arabian language, what we call Abdallah should be Abdoo'l-lah, and it is always so pronounced by the Orientals.

Mahomet was of the tribe Beni Koreish.

And much of good they boded, when they saw
The youth observe the queen with filial awe;
A princess, by her consort call'd to share
The splendour of his kingdom, and the care.
Thus soon the clouds of grief were chas'd away,
Before the brightness of the rising day.

A year had pass'd, when now the royal dame
Summon'd Abdoo'llah ('twas the vizier's name)
To stand before her throne. With doubts opprest,
Maternal feeling swell'd her heaving breast.
For much she heard of riotous abuse;
Unseemly luxury, expense profuse:
The public strength was mould'ring in decay;
The laws neglected left the poor a prey;
Oppression triumph'd, and the groans and tears
Of millions never reach'd the sovereign's ears,
Or never touch'd his heart; the robber bore
The sword which sacred justice rear'd before.
The minister confirm'd the shameful tale.
He liv'd to see the kingdom's glory fail:

Loose dalliance fill the hours the public claim; And the king's life the kingly state defame. Buffoons and revellers in council plac'd; Experience scorn'd, and rev'rend age disgrac'd. The mother and the queen indignant rose; She felt her private, and the public woes. And to the monarch bade th' attendants bear Her message, to require his private ear. And not in vain the mandate they impart, For uncorrupted was his generous heart. Instant he came, impatient to fulfil, To heaven obedient, her maternal will. In her most honour'd presence, all the pride Of stately royalty was laid aside. He knelt before her, and attentive caught Her words, and anxious watch'd each rising thought. "God," she began, "ordain'd thy favour'd birth,

- ' My son, above the vulgar race of earth.
- 'Thy lot was royal power. He bade thee bear
- 'The crown, and be his great vicegerent here:

- ' Vicegerent of that spirit, who alone
- ' Dispenses good from his eternal throne,
- ' Parent of all that lives, whose power protects
- With mighty arm, whose holy light directs.
- ' He bade thee from a noble father spring,
- ' His servant; one who was indeed a king;
- ' And gave thee all the qualities that move
- Respect and wonder, and conciliate love.
- ' Prophets thy greatness and thy fame foretold,
- ' Not such as may be bought with sordid gold;
- ' Which, while the slothful and the vile obtain,
- 'The wise and good behold with just disdain;
- ' But after dangers brav'd, and toil sustain'd,
- ' And right by patience, and with pain maintain'd,
- 'Th' immortal wreath which binds the hero's brows
- 'Which virtue gives, and heaven well-pleas'd allows.
- ' To thee thy father left a glorious throne:
- ' Among the lords of earth he stood alone.
- ' His people lov'd him, for he made them blest:
- ' His neighbours prais'd, for justice rul'd his breast.

- ' Alas, where is the kingdom's glory now?
- What laurels, oh my son, adorn thy brow?
- 'Where is the praise of temperance? Frugal care,
- 'Which should the state's continual waste repair?
- 'What prayers for thee ascend th' all-ruling sky?
- ' What kings with awe behold thy majesty?
- 'What are the mighty actions thou hast done?
- 'Where are the dangers brav'd, the trophies won?
- ' Where is the bright example which should raise
- 'Thy people to contend for virtue's praise,
- ' And forming them to what is truly great,
- ' Make thee, indeed, the father of the state?
- ' No trumpet's clangour thy repose alarms,
- 'The soft Zenana is thy field of arms.
- ' Lascivious dances, and the eunuch's song,
- 'Thy revels, shar'd with sycophants, prolong.
- On these thy father's treasure thou has spent:
- ' Voice of reproach, and public discontent,
- 'Thou wilt not hear: thou wilt not see the foe
- ' Watching the moment for thine overthrow.

- ' Oppression now must prop thy tott'ring throne;
- 'The people's treasures must supply thine own:
- ' Plunder'd and vex'd, thy lewd debauch to feed,
- 'Thou deem'st, oh madness, they for thee will bleed.
- 'Repent. Be wises Repentance yet may save,
- 'Assume thy sire, or be thyself a slave.'

She ceas'd. The king the just reproof confest,
And lock'd her prudent counsel in his breast:

Drove from his court the dissolute and vain,
And to the good Abdoo'llah gave the rein.

Anxious his former folly to repair,
Each province feels the sovereign's fost'ring care;
Well-order'd arms th' ambitious foe restrain;
Justice and law internal peace maintain;
The happy people trade, and arts employ,
And all Bassora's realm resounds with joy.

But full of boding tears the mother queen
Observ'd her alter'd son's dejected mien;
Pale melancholy on his vitals preys:
His spirits fail, his youthful strength decays.

His subjects deem his dissipated wealth
Afflicts his heart, and undermines his health;
With love spontaneous to his court repair,
And gold and gems their grateful offering bear.
All he refuses, and his secret woe
Still dims his eyes, and seems with time to grow.
Upon the past he meditates alone,
And thinks no penance may his fault atone:
Reviews his actions with severest care,
Condemns them all, and cherishes despair.

Night, welcome season of repose from toil,
Renews, with silent showers, the thirsty soil;
And the fair moon, in cloudless beauty bright,
Makes hill and valley shine with silver light.
Amid the general calm, the monarch prest
A sleepless couch, and strove in vain to rest.
But as the never-ceasing billows roar,
Though still repell'd, and vex the groaning shore,
In his torn breast regret and conscience keep
Perpetual vigil, and forbid to sleep.

At length th' exhausted pow'r of nature fails,
Stupor o'er ev'ry blunted sense prevails;
The blood in even current gently flows,
Transient oblivion follows, and repose.

Then, through the shade, before his sleeping eyes,
A venerable form was seen to rise.

Silver his streaming beard, his hoary hair

Was gently lifted by the passing air:
A flowing robe he wore of purest white,

And his soft aspect beam'd celestial light.

- "Oh, wretched son of woe," with accent mild,
- The vision said, and as he spoke he smil'd;
- ' Frail is the race of man, and born to grieve;
- But heav'n is good, and mighty to relieve.
- 'To sorrow joy succeeds, and thou, opprest
- 'To day with pain, to-morrow may'st be blest.
- ' Arise, to Cairo's crowded mart repair,
- ' And Nilus' sacred wave, there cease from all thy care.'

The phantom vanish'd, and the monarch rose Refresh'd from sleep, and eas'd of half his wees; Hope fill'd his breast. The queen, with glad surprize,
Beheld his vigorous step, his sparkling eyes:
But when she heard his purpose, to obey
The warning dream, and tempt the dang'rous way,
Silent awhile she stood, then flow'd her tears,
And thus the prudent matron spoke her fears:

- ' Ah me, unhappy! what malignant ray
- ' Rul'd the sad hour when first I saw the day.
- ' What frenzy now, my son, has fir'd thy brain,
- 'Thy royal state and office to disdain,
- 'The law of reason, and the will of heav'n;
- 'By every breath of fickle fancy driv'n;
- ' Ev'n by a dream ?-If any gen'rous aim,
- 'The thirst of conquest, or the hope of fame,
- ' Allur'd thee, though my more experienc'd age
- ' Might toil, and change calamitous presage,
- ' I would not check legitimate desires,
- ' Nor strive to damp the hero's noble fires.
- ' But why should Nile or Cairo yield relief
- ' More than Bassora for thy secret grief?

- 'Clear flows Euphrates through these fertile plains,
- 'Where date trees flourish, fed by gentle rains.
- 'The med'cine thou wouldst travel far to find
- ' Is here, if firm and constant be thy mind.d
- ' If not, of every remedy despair,
- 'The dream and vision are but shades and air.'
  - 'Oh queen,' Zeynu'l Asnâm sedate replied,
- 'What vision is so vain as reasoning pride?
- ' What God's irrevocable fates ordain
- 'The event declares; but we explore in vain.
- 'To man he lends a portion of his might;
- ' But every mind is dark without his light.
- ' His bidding, in the vision's voice I hear,
- ' And where he bids me go, he will be near.
- 'Then wherefore should I fear? The desert plain
- 'Th' Arabian robber bars my way in vain.
- ' I scorn his sabre, for I trust in heav'n:
- ' I know the promise to the faithful giv'n.
  - Quod petis hic est,
     Est Ulubris, animus si te non deficit æquus.

    Hor.

- ' Ev'n the sulphureous messenger of death,
- 'The dread Simoom's e inevitable breath,
- ' Is mercy, opening to my ravish'd sight
- 'The groves of paradise, the courts of light,
- ' And houries in immortal beauty bright.'

Thus spoke th' enthusiast prince, in ardent strain,
His purpose fix'd, and all remonstrance vain.
Then to his royal mother's practis'd hand
He delegates the sceptre of command;
And from Bassora, his imperial throne,
The willing exile wanders forth alone.
The hungry lion, as he roams for prey,
Glares terrible athwart his nightly way;
But, just in act to spring with dreadful roar,
Checks his fierce onset, aw'd by heav'nly pow'r.

e The Smum, Simoom, or Samiel, a deleterious blast of the desert. When its approach is perceived its deadly effects may be avoided, if the traveller fall prostrate on the ground, but if it is received into the lungs it is fatal. The reader may find an account of it in Niehbur.

The moon shines forth, resplendent queen of night; Shine forth the stars, the glitt'ring host of light, Guides of his way along the pathless waste: The Bedoween, with hospitable haste, Invites him to his board, and runs to bring The purest beverage from the gushing spring; Till full of hope and rapture he descries Unnumber'd domes and minarets arise, Where Cairo, first of cities, views with pride Nile's mighty stream her fertile reign divide. Within the walls the traveller at last Reposes, all his toils and dangers past. Stretch'd upon straw, beneath a lowly shed, Bassora's monarch lays his weary head. What time beyond th' Atlantic sinking bright The sun on Abyla f throws ruddy light,

f Abyla is the promontory on the African side of the Straits of Gibraltar.

And scarce the moon, apparent queen, displays O'er earth, and heav'n's expanse, her silver rays, When o'er his senses unresisted stole Soft sleep, and in oblivion bath'd his soul. Hail, awful night! unfolding to the eye Of wond'ring man th' eternal majesty, Beneath whose footstool, spangling all the sphere, Myriads of suns dispense his bounteous year To worlds, where living souls their voices raise, Millions of millions, to proclaim his praise; By him endu'd with mind, and taught to rise On wings of faith and hope to brighter skies; By grace made perfect, in his holy place To view their great Creator face to face; And by his love ineffable from hell Redeem'd, in his unclouded joy to dwell.

Oh universal Father! since thy care

Ev'n the most abject of thy creatures share,

Not unaccepted may these lays ascend

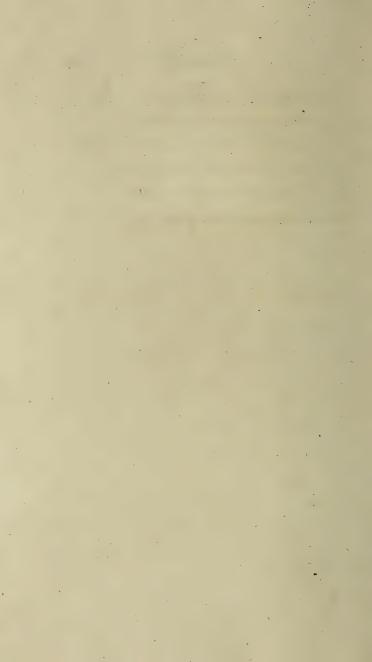
Where choirs of angels in thy presence bend!

These lays, where fiction weaves her flow'rs, to draw

Man's wavering heart to thine unchanging law,

And calls thy scepter'd servants to maintain

By virtue only their permitted reign.

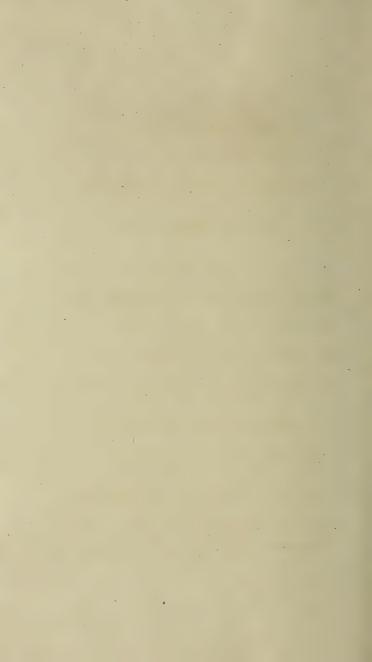


# THE STATUES;

OR, THE

# STORY OF ZEYNU 'LASNÂM.

CANTO II.



### THE STATUES;

OR, THE

### STORY OF ZEYNU 'LASNAM.

#### CANTO II.

The dawn now streak'd with light the eastern skies.

Still sleep sat heavy on the monarch's eyes.

But ere the sun his orient glory shed,

The same majestic form before his bed

Appear'd, and in familiar accents said,

- 'Thy faith, thy piety, thy courage shewn,
- ' Have favour won from Him who rules alone.
- 'The power all-seeing in his golden scale
- · Hath tried, nor has thy weight been found to fail.
- ' Freely thy royal state thou couldst resign,
- A glorious kingdom therefore shall be thine.

- ' Return to fair Bassora, and obtain
- ' The guerdon of thy constancy and pain,
- 'The noblest gifts that can adorn a mortal reign.'
  Then slumber fled his couch, and undismay'd,
  And trusting still, the king the dream obey'd.
  Bassora hails him with triumphant voice,
  And all her streets and provinces rejoice.
  The faithful regent, eager to restore
  To hands so dear her delegated pow'r,
  With love maternal strains him to her breast,
  Nor deems the day she bore him was so blest.

Much she inquires, and much the king will say
Of toils and dangers which infest the way,
Th' Ægyptian city, and the fertile plains
O'er which the mighty Nile prolific reigns.
Mysterious stream! about whose sacred head
Impenetrable mists and darkness spread,
The search of many an age has laugh'd to scorn:
Whether on earth the wondrous spring be born,

Bursting the mountains of the moon, or given

Forth from the world of waves, above th' expanse of
heaven:

But if important aught the power reveal'd

Touching the dream, with care he still conceal'd:

For lofty hopes his ardent mind possess,

Those hopes maternal caution might repress.

Now silent night the weary world renews
With balmy sleep, and soft descending dews.
Deep slumbers rested on the monarch's bed,
Again the vision came, and thus it said,

- Servant of heav'n! thou hast my words believ'd:
- · Faith which relies on heav'n is ne'er deceiv'd.
- ' Go to thy father's chamber, search around,
- 'There shall a treasure nobler far be found
- 'Than all the wealth which proud Golconda yields,
- ' Bengala, or Serendib's spicy fields.'

He springs from sleep: his eyes are bright with fire:

He seeks the lofty chamber of his sire;

And ev'ry part explores with patient pain: His hope is frustrate still, his search is vain. At length a pannel open'd, and disclos'd A casket, where a golden key repos'd. He seiz'd the glitt'ring gift, and soon appears, Mysterious object of his hopes and fears, A secret door. The golden key apply'd, The door on sounding hinge flies open wide. A glory than the sun's meridian light More clear, now bursts upon his wond'ring sight, In order'd piles are golden Ingots seen, And heaps of sparkling jewels shine between. He stands within a temple, and a shrine Blazes in front, of workmanship divine, Which holds a pedestal of purest gold, Enrich'd with gems, and dazzling to behold. On either side two other shrines appear'd: In each, on golden pedestal uprear'd, An image, whose majestic form display'd Dignity more than human. Holy dread, And expectation all his soul pervade.

One glorious shape upon whose front appear a Deliberate counsel, and resolve severe, Extends a balance with unshaken hand: Two satellites attend at her command; One darkly frowning, one with cheerful brows, That bears the sword, and this the palm bestows. The next in robes of splendid white was drest; The sun of truth glow'd radiant on her breast; With eyes still fix'd on heav'n, she seem'd to raise The grateful voice of worship and of praise. The third, in heav'nly panoply array'd, Advanc'd a'mighty spear. Her crested head From high insufferable glory shed. Her proud foot treads on danger and on pain; Fortune and change oppose her march in vain. The fourth angelic form more mildly shone; An azure robe was o'er her shoulders thrown:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The four Statues are Justice, Religion, Fortitude, and Prudence.

Calm and compos'd though thoughtful was her mien; A golden measure in one hand was seen. And golden curb: a mirror in her right She bore, reflecting rays of purest light. Delighted while he gaz'd, a solemn sound Of heavenly harmonies is breath'd around; And odours balmy as the fragrant gale Which spirits blest in paradise inhale, Greet his enraptur'd sense. Before his eyes A form, b in mist involv'd, appears to rise. Gradual the fleecy vapour melts away; The limbs, the face, successive meet the day. Amazement seiz'd the prince: the purple flood In ev'ry torpid vein suspended stood. It was his father. In his hand he bore The sceptre, and the royal robe he wore.

b I have here deviated a little from my original, for the sake of what appeared to me a more interesting and poetical machinery than an inscription on satin.

Such as in life appear'd Bassora's lord,
When nations prostrate at his throne ador'd:
But larger, and of loftier port he seem'd,
And from his eyes divine effulgence beam'd.
Over his kneeling son his hands he spread,
And pleas'd inclin'd his venerable head.

- 'Oh son,' the spectre said, 'in life most dear,
- ' And, ev'n beyond the grave, my fondest care!
- 'The hour by prophets long foretold is come,
- ' Pregnant with fate's irrevocable doom:
- Hence, from the realms of empyrean day,
- I come to prompt, and to direct thy way.
- ' Behold the talismans, whose force divine
- 'The wav'ring course of fortune can confine,
- And fix the firm foundations of thy throne,
- By war or faction ne'er to be o'erthrown.
- ' By patient toil and peril these I gain'd;
- 'A richer prize must be by thee obtain'd.
- Fix the fifth Statue on its golden base,
- And be more blest than all of human race.

- But dreadful is the task. If any fear
- ' Can quell thy heart, forbear, my son, forbear.
- 'If love of selfish pleasure taint thy mind,
- ' Hope not the guerdon of the brave to find.
- But, if thy conscious virtue bid thee dare,
- ' Proceed. To Cairo's walls again repair.
- 'There does my faithful slave Mobarrek dwell;
- ' He shall thy course direct, and counsel well
- 'What rite mysterious may the pow'r incline,
- ' Propitious to assist thy great design.'
- The voice was heard no more, the vision fled,

The monarch rose, astonish'd, not dismay'd.

With awe the royal mother heard the tale,

Respect and duty o'er her fears prevail;

- ' Proceed, my son, with falt'ring tongue she said,
- 'Thy sire has spoken. Be his will obey'd.
- While yet he liv'd, how glorious was his place,
- More wise esteem'd than all of human race.
- . Now purified by death, and blest above,
- · Perfect his knowledge, and unchang'd his love.'

Joyful he heard, and with undaunted breast,
And foot unweary'd, his bold journey prest,
Exploring o'er the pathless waste his way,
By the moon's nightly course, or starry ray;
The blush of orient morn, or closing day,
Till, glitt'ring far and wide upon the plain,
Cairo appears, and gives him rest again.

Warn'd from above, the slave, with duteous care,
Attends, and hails his master's royal heir.

Prostrate before the prince's feet he lay,
And clasp'd his knees, and thus began to say.

- ' Before the order of the years began,c
- ' And, at the voice of God, predestin'd man,
- 'Rose into life, a race of heav'nly birth,
- Fairies and dives possess'd the fertile earth.
- "These, of stupendous force and haughty air;
- ' More gentle those, and more divinely fair.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>e</sup> Fairies and genii are part of the popular belief of the east. The whole of this mythology may be found in d'Herbelot. These verses give a very full and accurate account of it.

- But soon with bliss corrupted, swoln with pride,
- 'Their senseless rage the Lord of heav'n defy'd.
- 'Then earth through all her regions felt alarm,
- 'Then wrath awak'd, and vengeance rais'd his arm.
- 'The sun was dark, convulsion shook the ground,
- 'The roaring world of waters burst its mound;
- · From ev'ry quarter of the louring sky
- Rush'd the fierce winds, commission'd to destroy;
- 'Th' eternal barrier which surrounds the world,
- 'Kâf's mighty mass, was in confusion hurl'd:
- With thunder shook the universal frame,
- " And heav'n was pour'd on earth in floods of flame.
- 'The rebel crew lay vanquish'd. Some, o'erthrown,
- ' Beneath incumbent mountains writhe and groan:
- \* Some, pierc'd with lightning, feel in ev'ry vein
- 'The burning plague's intolerable pain.
- "O'er these, the free and glorious now no more,
- ' A mighty angel holds imperial pow'r;
- (Such doom did heav'n impose,) whose rigid sway,
- Reluctant still, the gloomy dives obey;

- \* Less obstinate in ill, the fairy train
- From this stern lord a milder lot obtain:
- ' But his vain heart glows with ambitious fire,
- And dares to independent rule aspire.
- "He tasks their qualities to make him great;
- ' Conscious of power, assumes a godlike state;
- And, confident and proud, his force compares
- 'With Him, whose dread right arm the thunder bears:
- 'Then from the dust, on which the boaster trod,
- Rose a new creature at the word of God,
- God bade him reign, and haughty Eblis bow
- ' Before him, and on earth a master know.
- ' But the proud son of fire with fury burn'd
- 'Rebellious, and defiance fierce return'd.
- Then from his high and glorious state he fell,
- 'To reign in torments, amid night and hell;
- ' With him the dives, perverse and impious crew;
- 'The gentle fairies trembled and withdrew.
- ' For them the holy city's lord, the son
- Of righteous David, grace and favour won;

- \* Pleas'd to forgive, relenting heav'n bestow'd,
- On Kâf's extremest verge, a fair abode;
- ' And bade through Ginnistan bright rivers flow,
- ' And fragrant gales o'er spicy harvests blow.
- 'To man they minister with kindly care,
- ' Lead on the spring, and crown the ripen'd year.
  - 'Thy noble sire, in every art approv'd
- 'That fits a prince, the king of fairy lov'd.
- 'Through him the four bright images were gain'd:
- 'Through him alone the fifth must be obtain'd.'
  - 'Delay no more,' th' impatient youth exclaims,

While hope and strong desire his breast inflames:

- 'Be thou my guide. Though stern athwart my way
- Danger stand frowning, me no threats dismay.
- 'My hope, my heart, th' adventure will require,
- "The daring deed the fairy shall admire,
- And bless the son who emulates his sire.'

Sighing, Mobarrek bow'd, and smote his breast,

While tears the anguish of his soul confest.

He shook his hoary locks, and thus he said,

- · Four times his slave thy noble father led,
- ' Where mighty Atlas lifts his towering brow
- ' High o'er the western Kâf,d and well I know
- 'The painful way. Canst thou like him confide
- ' With full assurance on an heavenly guide?
- 'Then go, where lions and hyænas glare,
- 'The angry dipsas' fiery wound to dare,
- 'O'er burning ends where pain and anguish tread,
- 'Where thirst and famine fill the brave with dread,
- ' And the swift whirlwind, with resistless breath,
- ' Lifts the whole plain in air, and crushes hosts in death.
- But deem not, these escap'd, thy danger past:
- ' More dread than all, the fairy comes at last.

d The people of the east, finding their countries bounded on one side by the ridge of Caucasus, and on the other by Atlas, conceived the habitable earth was surrounded by a vast barrier of rocky mountains. Ginnistan, the abode of the Ginn (that is, of the Dives and Fairies) was supposed to be a part of it. The whole of this imaginary wall was denominated Kâf.

- 'The fairy train with perfect ministry,
- ' While God commands, the wants of man supply;
- ' For him they labour, though of nobler birth,
- ' And own him lord of all the fertile earth.
- ' But who implores their aid for partial ends
- ' From his pre-eminence at once descends.
- 'To malice prone, and faithless are the kind,
- ' For former guilt has left a taint behind;
- ' And blest are they who but their scorn engage,
- 'Torture and death await who wake their rage.'
  His words are vain. Zeynu 'lAsnâm maintains
  His purpose, and what fear suggests disdains.
  Mobarrek with experienced zeal prepares
  Camels and stores. Then forth the monarch fares,
  Darts over Afric's continent his eye,
  And deems the desert past, and Kâf already nigh.

Their tedious labour why should I rehearse,
With names uncouth and strange to mar the verse?

Still on their steps some fav'ring pow'r attends,
Where frowns the forest, where the waste extends,
O'er craggy mountain, and o'er foaming flood,
Till on the utmost bound of earth they stood.
A mighty sea upon the rocky shore
Beats with continual wave, and sullen roar:
Atlas beyond his awful summit rears,
And with his mighty shoulder props the spheres.
A lovely island in the middle space,
The waters in their genial arms embrace;
Fair are its swelling hills with verdure drest,
And there the ling'ring sun-beam loves to rest.

- ' Behold the fairy land,' Mobarrek cried,
- ' And now to pass the lake we must provide.
- 'But first I warn thee, prince, thy wond'ring eyes
- Whatever uncouth vision may surprise,
- 'Behold in silence. If a word, a sound,
- ' Escape thy lips, for thee th' abyss profound
- ' Shall open, and impenetrable night
- Receive thee, never to behold the light.'

Scarce had he spoken, when the prince beheld A vessel o'er the yielding wave compell'd. With vigorous arm the boatman ply'd his oar, And with the lightning's speed he reach'd the shore. But when the fairy mariner appears Reveal'd, the stoutest heart with boding fears Might tremble.<sup>e</sup> O'er his brawny back and side, Form'd like a tiger's, glar'd a brinded hide: Spreading his dreadful fangs abroad he stood Rais'd on his hinder paws, and as athirst for blood. Wav'd quick his sinewy tail with dreadful sway, And seem'd in act to spring upon his prey: But on his shoulders broad appear'd display'd A mighty elephant's enormous head: The polish'd tusks stood forth, terrific sight, And shone before him with portentous light. His lithe proboscis round the prince he threw. And from the shore with rapid action drew,

e This description of the Fairy Boatman, is copied exactly from the Arabian Tale. It was probably symbolical, or hieroglyphical.

And seated in the boat. Mobarrek then

He seiz'd, and instant push'd to sea again.

So swift the bark the yielding wave divides,

They hear no water rippling from the sides,

For still before the sound the vessel glides.

The monster boatman lifts them both to shore;

They touch it, and the spectre's seen no more.

The prince looks round and nothing views but flowers,

Cool grottoes, lucid rills, and shady bowers:

The gentle seasons mingled influence bring,

And summer wears the fragrant wreaths of spring:

And pleasant is the murmuring water's sound;

And soft the balmy gale that fans the ground;

And sweet the music of the vocal grove,

And smooth the turf below, and bright the skies above.

But soon the fairy palace they behold,

Stupendous frame of adamant and gold.

Before the portal rang'd on either hand

An hundred giants sternly frowning stand;

And scarce in sight th' approaching prince appears,
When each his mace with threat'ning gesture rears;
They clash their golden shields, and lift on high
A shout that shakes the mountains and the sky.
Mobarrek seiz'd the prince's arm and spoke,

- ' Stand, nor inevitable death proveke.
- ' Around us, lo, what magic lines I trace.
- ' Dare not to pass beyond this guarded space.
- ' Here must my lips the mighty charm rehearse,
- 'The solemn call, the high mysterious verse,
- ' Which may propitiate (may the prophet lend
- ' His gracious aid, and still my lord defend)
- 'The awful sovereign of the fairy reign.'

He said, and chanted forth the potent strain.

And scarce had ceas'd, when earthquake rock'd the ground.

And thunder roll'd, in peals on peals, around;

Sulphureous flashes rive the knotted oak,

Hurl down the rocks, and make the mountains smoke;

And such an horrid cry is heard in air,

Scarce the last trumpet shall more terror bear.

The storm subsides at length, and zephyr greets
The sense with soft breath and ambrosial sweets;
Shines forth the golden sun, and nature wears
Her brightest dress. The fairy king appears.
So radiant, with such heav'nly beauty bright,
Descended from beside the throne of light
The angel Gabriel, oracles to bring
To Mecca's prophet from th' eternal King.
Gracious the fairy smil'd, but mortal eye
Scarce could sustain his glorious majesty.
He spoke. The king confessed unwonted fear,
For though the sound melodious met the ear,
Yet more than human was his awful voice.

- 'Be welcome, prince, and bid thy soul rejoice.
- 'The Statue, object of thy fond desire,
- ' My love bestows. But hear what I require.
- ' Go search the spacious earth. When thou shalt find
- ' A maid of faultless form, and spotless mind,
- ' Who fifteen years has number'd, and most fair
- ' Of earthly dames, with Houries might compare,

- ' So chaste of soul, that never wish of love
- ' Her virgin breast with transient warmth could move,
- ' Yet mild as balmy Eve, when she renews
- ' The languid earth with soft descending dews;
- ' Her shalt thou woo, and, though her price should drain
- 'Thy kingdom's treasures, her thou must obtain.
- 'The maid in beauty, and in mind, divine
- 'I claim; the Statue, this perform'd, is thine.
- ' Easy thou deem'st the task. Now hear, with awe,
- 'This solemn, stern, irrevocable law.
- 'If negligent, or by fair shews misled,
- 'Thou bring to share the honours of my bed,
- 'One but in thought impure, ye perish both!
- 'With Eblis be my doom, if vain my oath!
- ' Hear more and tremble. Urg'd by youthful fire,
- 'If on my bride thou fix one loose desire,
- ' (To me the inmost heart is still display'd,)
- ' My kindled wrath, my fiercest vengeance dread.'
- To whom the king. 'Oh spirit, thine to scan
- 'The secret thought, the hidden soul of man:

- 'But how shall mortal sense unerring view
- \* The female breast, and false discern from true?"
- The lofty genius smil'd, and 'here, he cry'd,
- ' Behold thy weak imperfect sense supplied.
- 'This mirror, fram'd in planetary hour,
- ' (Be but the heart sincere which tries its pow'r,)
- 'Whatever fault the conscious maid conceal,
- 'Shall, in clear vision, to thy sight reveal.'

The king receiv'd the charm, and nothing loth,

Pronounc'd the dread, inviolable oath.

Full of one wish, to all the future blind,

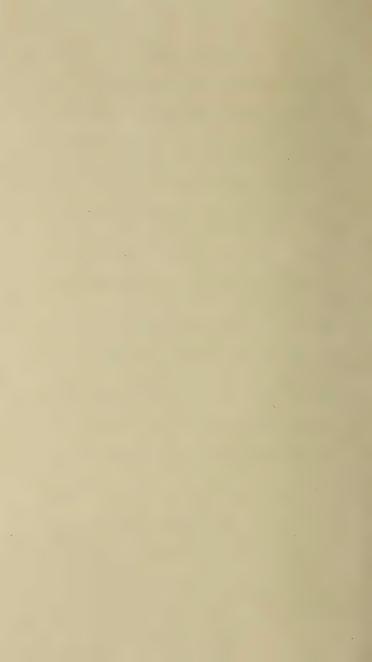
His heart was stupid, and obscur'd his mind.

Scarce had he said when boding fears arose,

Presaging signals of impending woes.

His father's spirit seem'd to hover near,

And sighs and moanings sounded in his ear.

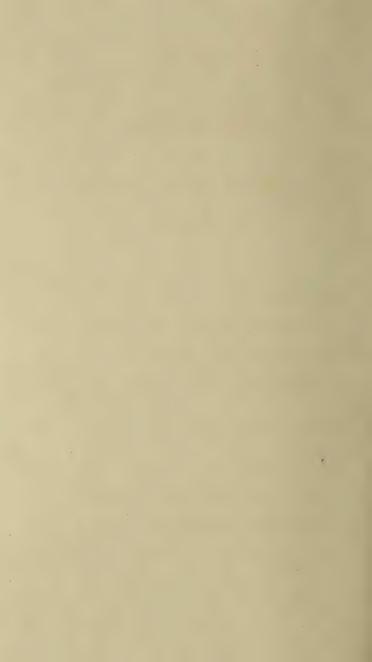


# THE STATUES;

OR, THE

## STORY OF ZEYNU 'LASNÂM.

CANTO III.



### THE STATUES;

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#### CANTO III.

On sweetest magic of bright-flowing hair!

Love-darting eyes, and cheeks like morning fair!

Lips, bath'd by Venus in nectareous dew!

And dimpled smiles, which who unmov'd may view?

Soft winning accents, whose melodious force

Arrests the stormy passions in their course!

And constant truth, with chaste affection join'd,

And each delicious charm of lovely womankind!

When fierce desires with fraud and force combine,

Polluting earth, and rouze the wrath divine;

Ere yet the guilt-appalling bolt be hurl'd,
Your virtues favour find, and save the world.
For your's is mercy, pity's soft relief,
And patience smiling through the tear of grief:
Your's soft humility, and moving pray'r,
Which heav'n well pleas'd beholds, and bends to hear:

With charity diffusing blessings wide,
And graceful modesty, and decent pride.
Heav'n yields to these; but these are weak to tame
The savage man, and touch his heart with shame.
His sordid soul is stung with thirst of gain,
And honour, mercy, justice, plead in vain.
He goes without remorse, and scorning truth,
To spread the snare for unsuspecting youth,
To cozen innocence, and to despair,
Betray the gen'rous, tender, trusting, fair.
Now lofty Cairo meets again his eyes,
And his fond hopes already grasp the prize.

A thousand maids appear in glowing charms;
He deems them worthy of the fairy's arms:
To each in turn the mirror he applies:
The glass shews dim, and expectation dies.

There the rich plains which Libanus o'ershades,

He visits, curious of the Syrian maids,

Whose amorous ditties now are heard no more,<sup>a</sup>

Lamenting Thammuz on Adonis' shore.

Next where Orontes leads his mighty stream;

And fair Ionia fronts the western beam;

There Meles and Mæander wind along,

Vocal no more with high heroic song:

And where old Ida lifts his front of snow,

And Simois glitters in the plain below:

Next these the realms where once, with generous pride,

The Pontic king triumphant Rome defied:

Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day.

MILTON'S PAR. LOST.

And where, in brightest hues of nature drest,
Circassia's b beauties bind the swelling breast.
Thence Persia he surveys, which boasts no more
Its antient satraps, and majestic pow'r;
But whose fair echoing vallies still prolong
The joyful sound of revelry and song;
While round Shiraz the vine her sparkling juice
Pours for the blest inhabitants profuse;
And when the rising moon, of ray serene,
With softest lustre decks the lovely scene,
By Rocnabad,c in Mosellara's bower,
The bird of evening wooes the blushing flower.
But Syrian nymphs had glow'd with gentle flame,
E'er since Adonis mov'd the Cyprian dame:

b The reader may consult Ellis's Caucasus for an account of a singular custom which prevails among the Circassians, of fixing a ligature below the breasts of the young women, which is not loosed till the day of marriage, when it is cut by the bridegroom. From a similar custom, probably, the loosing of the zone, came to signify among the Greeks and Romans the loss of virginity.

c Rocnabad is a river of Persia, which washes the walls of Shiraz, and the gardens of Mosellara. The nightingale is said, by the Oriental Poets, to be enamoured of the Rose.

And love had whisper'd in their secret glades,
To rough Circassia's fair high-bosom'd maids:
While the sweet bird in Mosellara's bower,
That trills his love-song to the blushing flower,
Well skill'd infectious softness to impart,
Had touch'd with passion ev'ry virgin heart.

As when the seaman whose advent'rous prow, Long months on months, with toil, and pain, and woe, Has plow'd th' immeasurable waves which roll Between the burning line and southern pole, Beholds with anxious breast, and ardent eyes, Incumbent on the deep, a dark shade rise Above the horizon, struggling through the tides, As nearer now his wave-worn vessel rides, He sees a length of hills and mountains spread, Those crown'd with woods, while these the skies invade; Forelands and promontories high and steep, Lock'd in whose firm embrace the waters sleep; And fir'd with joyful transport at the view, Shouts loud, and calls on deck his fainting crew:

Ev'n while he shouts, the faithless shews decay, 'The fleeting vapours roll dispers'd away:

Despair succeeds. Such was the prince's pain, His hope still frustrate, his long labours vain.

Bagdad with high dominion crown'd remains

Where the lieutenant of the prophet reigns.

Viziers and Omrahs, in the lofty gate,

Sustain and worship his imperial state.

Say, Tigris, while thy lucid waves with pride
Reflect the palaces which grace thy side;
While all thy echoes mirth and joy repeat,
And every breeze diffuses balmy sweet;
Has never yet thy stately stream survey'd
Of pure and spotless mind one lovely maid?
Must fond desire in each fair bosom reign,
And love, with life, still beat in ev'ry vein?

A dervise, at Bagdad who pass'd his days,
Had won of so much sanctity the praise,
That where he mov'd, the swarming city pour'd
Her people forth, and with fond zeal ador'd.

It chanced that, mounted on a courser fair, And all his anxious soul engross'd with care, The monarch slowly pass'd along the road, Where round the dervise pray'd the prostrate crowd, And pass'd unheeding. With offended mind The dervise saw, and dark revenge design'd. And soon through all the city rumours spread; Suspicion points to wrath the stranger's head. The gathering storm Mobarrek mark'd, and knew From what slight cause the threaten'd mischief grew. Swift to the haughty dervise he repairs, A royal present, gold and gems he bears, And begs his aid, his counsel, and his pray'rs. While prostrate in his master's name he sues, The glitt'ring gifts the yielding dervise views: The gifts, the suppliant lord, his wrath control, And soon the banquet opens all his soul. He learns the strange pursuit, and laughing cries, 'Thou seek'st in truth, my son, no vulgar prize, But bring the nuptial gift, Bagdad the bride supplies.

- ' In you high palace dwells a matchless fair,
- 'The vizier's daughter, sweet Nooronihár.
- Nymphs such as she shall make the faithful blest,
- ' And pure as angels is her peaceful breast.' He said, and soon, by his officious care, The prince beheld her more than Houries fair, As heavenly spirits pure, for in his view From her the mirror brighter lustre drew. His rank acknowledged, and a dowry paid, Worthy a kingdom, he obtains the maid. But scarce the bride has enter'd at his gate, When messengers, on high affairs of state, Demand his instant presence. Royal care Perforce thus tears him from th' espoused fair. Mobarrek must the blooming queen escort, With splendid train to high Bassora's court. Far spreads the pompous march. On either side Well-order'd horse display their martial pride. Unhappy maid! who vainly deem'st the ray Of rising morn shall those fair scenes display,

Where prostrate nations on Euphrates' shore,
Before thy bridegroom bow, and own his sovereign pow'r.
Thee anxious doubt, and lengthen'd toil await,
And unknown dangers, and mysterious fate!

Oh, vanity of man! the prize obtain'd

Now pains his soul: the statue is disdain'd.

Fear, love; remorse, his nightly couch infest,

And peace and hope are banish'd from his breast;

His eyes have drank the poison of desire,

And ev'ry throbbing vein is swell'd with fire.

The fairy's threat that rings within his ears,

The awful oath that chill'd his soul with fears,

Disdain'd, forgotten, have no power to move;

He deems all danger light, when weigh'd with love.

- 'Those heavenly graces, those unrivall'd charms,
- ' Shall I betray them to another's arms?
- ' From earth, from human kind, from life, divide
- ' My hope, my joy, my mistress, and my bride,
- ' With gloomy genii, and with dæmons fell,
- 'To mourn and tremble in the jaws of hell'

- 'The cruel fairy may, perchance, relent,
- ' Or pitying angels frustrate his intent.
- ' Justice at least must spare the faultless maid:
- ' By me alone the forfeit must be paid.
- "Twere base the stern condition to decline,
- ' And death is welcome, so the maid be mine.'

As when a mountain torrent, swoln with rain, Roaring descends to ruin all the plain; The careful husbandman, with patient toil, Digs a new channel in the crumbling soil, Through which the waters from the rescu'd land, May waste their fury on the barren sand: Huge stones, with earth compact, across its course Gradual obstruct the foaming water's force, Which struggling still, and bursting oft the mound, More rapid pours along, with thund'ring sound: At length the growing bulwark stems the sides; The waves roll back, and the fierce storm subsides: Mobarrek thus with prudent speech in vain Strives long his master's passion to restrain,

To rash desire opposes generous fame,
His royal duties, and his people's claim;
But most his plighted faith and promise given,
And the dread oath's avenger, righteous heaven.
These, often urg'd, at length the palm obtain,
And manly reason re-assumes the rein.
Though keenest anguish rend his tortur'd heart,
Collecting all his strength, he braves the smart;
He mourns the fatal hour, when unconfin'd
The thirst of gain misled his darken'd mind;
But firm the strong temptation to defy,
Maintains his faith, and only hopes to die.

Nor less distracting doubt, and vary'd fear,
Afflict the tender bosom of the fair,
While day to day, and week to week succeeds,
And still the long unvaried march proceeds;
And all the pomp that first adorn'd the way,
And all the splendid train has slunk away;
No shouting nations her arrival greet;
No scepter'd bridegroom comes his bride to meet;

Mobarrek with austere and careful brow,
One slave, one maid, alone, attend her now.
Yet still, where'er she moves, a sudden birth
Of fairest plants adorns the laughing earth:
O'er Afric's sandy waste fresh verdure springs,
And gurgling fountains rise, and zephyr brings
Cool airs, and scatters fragrance from his wings.
And ever, when most fiercely flames the day,
High o'er her head the waving branches play,
While through the grove ten thousand feather'd
throats

Pour the sweet charm of their melodious notes,
And all around their painted plumage show,
Dipt in all colours of the heavenly bow:
No lion there his horrid mane displays,
But the swift antelope will stop to gaze;
The playful squirrel springs from side to side,
While zebras bound along in beauteous pride.
And when pale night's unwholesome damps descend,
In fair proportion polish'd domes ascend;

By hands invisible the board is spread;
Another day unnumber'd torches shed,
And all around angelic voices sing,
While airy minstrels wake the trembling string.
The power of sleep the gentle music woos
To bathe her temples in his softest dews:
Soft gliding on the silv'ry lunar beams,
The fav'ring power descends with rosy dreams:
Delights unmix'd, and pure, her mind pervade,
And sweetest smiles adorn the sleeping maid.
Upon the rocky shore at length they stood,
Where full in view, above the mighty flood
The fairy land arose. The gentle maid
Saw the vast deep, astonish'd and afraid.

- 'Is this Euphrates? Where are then the bowers,
- 'Themes of the song? Ah where Bassora's towers?
- ' These roaring waves approaching ills foreshew,
- ' And every howling blast seems full of woe.'

  Her guide no more the fatal fraud conceals,

  But with sad brow, and falt'ring tongue, reveals

The royal nuptials feign'd but to betray,

The awful genius who expects his prey.

Her blood forgets to flow; her spirits fail;

Her eyes grow dim; her lips are cold and pale:

What agony then tore the prince's heart,

Say you, whoe'er have felt a lover's smart.

His labouring lungs their office scarce sustain,

Parch'd is his tongue, his temples throb with pain;

Grief and despair his tortur'd bosom fill,

But firm his mind, unconquer'd is his will.

And soon the nymphs, a gentle troop and fair,
Nymphs of the woods, the fountains, and the air,
The fainting damsel bathe with heav'nly dew,
Recall her sense, her faded bloom renew,
Raise in their soft embrace, and fondly greet,
As sisters sisters use, with accent sweet.
Those accents sweet the virgin's fears beguile,
On her fair cheek appear'd again the smile.
Th' attendant nymphs mean time their voices raise
To speak in heav'nly harmonies her praise.

- 'Stretch forth,' they cried, 'delightful land, thine arms,
- ' To meet Nooronihár's unrivall'd charms.
- ' Bid all thy echoing vallies ring with joy,
- 'While to exulting earth the skies reply.
- ' Nooronihar, with perfect beauty grac'd!
- ' Nooronihar, the lovely and the chaste.'

And while they sung, a miracle to view,

Near and more near the blooming island drew;

From all her lawns and bowers the balmy breeze

Before her course sheds fragrance o'er the seas;

Fresh verdure clothes the ground; on ev'ry brow

The waving groves in sign of worship bow,

And all around a shower of blossoms fling,

Till to the palace of the fairy king

That troop of nymphs divine the damsel bring.

And then an awful voice was heard in air,

- 'Oh prince, to thy paternal throne repair,
- 'The promis'd treasure there thou shalt obtain:
- ' But quit for ever this forbidden strand,
- ' Nor dare again to view the fairy land.'

Now all was silent. And more swift than thought, Spirits invisible the monarch caught; A veil of mist they spread around, and bore On the wind's pinions to Euphrates' shore. He stood ev'n in the chamber of his sire; But now his eyes have lost their wonted fire. Full in his view the fatal portal rose; But no fond transport in his bosom glows, As when he first its massy bars descry'd, And to the wards the golden key applied. With eyes averted and with sullen brow He stood, and thus at length express'd his woe. Oh wretch, by every sordid passion sway'd!

- Why is the wrath of heaven so long delay'd?
- But wherefore should his awful thunder roll?
- \* I bear the torment of a guilty soul.
- ' My early reign in shameful pleasure spent,
- ' Enervate grief, despair, and discontent,
- ' Succeed; and when too partial fate my throne
- Restores, sustains, by virtues not my own.

- ' In vain is wealth, in vain dominion given,
- My soul insatiate baffles bounteous heaven!
- With cold disdain receives so vast a store,
- ' And with ungrateful madness thirsts for more.
- 'There stands the prize for which my peace I sold,
- ' Nor dare I now my gains accurs'd behold.
- 'Oh faith, too strictly kept! Oh love betray'd!
- 'Oh tears, and wailings of that matchless maid!'
  Thus while he mourns, loud thunders rend the air,
  And flashing fires proclaim the fairy near.
  But when the tumult ceas'd, confess'd to sight,
  In glory cloth'd, in awful beauty bright,
  The spirit stood and spoke, while from his face
  Divine compassion beam'd, and gentle grace.
- ' Just is thy self reproof. But heaven has view'd
- 'Thy painful conflict, thy desires subdued.
- 'Know, that an heavenly guardian from the birth
- Attends unseen on every son of earth,
- Good thoughts to prompt, and evil to control,
- And whisper saving warnings to the soul;

- ' And when the germ of penitence within
- " Has fix'd its fibres, and the shoots begin
- 'To spread with vigorous growth, and master sin;
- ' Assiduous, this benignant power the root
- ' Protects, till it mature the sacred fruit;
- ' Exulting then he spreads his purple wings,
- ' And to the throne of heaven the tribute brings,
- 'While the avenger, at th' Almighty nod,
- " Cancels the record, and lays by the rod.d
- ' Absolv'd and free, embrace the good to come.
- ' Behold! th' eternal Sovereign's gracious doom,
- ' Indulgent to thy frail and erring mind,
- Reveal'd to sense, a guardian has assign'd,
- 'Thy joys to multiply, thy cares divide,
- With love to sooth, with sweet example guide,
- ' To teach thee virtue every good excels,
- ' And heaven will still be found, where virtue dwells.'

d This passage has some resemblance to, and may have been suggested by the accusing and recording angel, in the story of Le Fevre, in Sterne.

Then, at his word, the portal open flew; The golden pedestal appear'd in view, On which display'd a lovely figure stands, With looks of pleasure and extended hands. As one in sleep profound, if sudden light Appear, or clamour scare the silent night, Starts with disorder'd air, and still misdeems Of all he sees, and doubts if yet he dreams; So fares the prince. His blood now scarcely flows; Now with the rapid tide his bosom glows. Fain would be spring his chosen fair to meet, But doubt and dread restrain his eager feet. Fain would he speak: the sound unfinish'd dies. Upon the fairy his inquiring eyes Anxious he fixes, while with clasped hands, Quick-beating breast, and quivering lip he stands. At length, 'It is,' he cried, 'it is the maid 'Whom my heart worship'd, while my words betray'd! 'Oh, painful moment of suspense and fear!

'Will mercy's soothing voice my spirit cheer?

- 'Or does stern justice, by vain hope, prepare
- 'To make more keen the torment of despair?'

The gracious fairy then, 'Thy fears dismiss,

- ' And open all thy soul to purest bliss:
- ' Nor thou, bright nymph, what heaven bestows disdain,
- 'Thy royal bridegroom, and thy promis'd reign.'

  He said, and gave her hand. With downcast eyes,

  And blushing sweet consent, the nymph complies.

  Th' enraptur'd prince receives the matchless maid,

  In all her beauty's bloom, with every grace array'd,

  And clasps with fond embrace his lovely wife,

  More dear than all, than riches, thrones, or life.

THE END.

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